Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY

3

FESTIVAL ACCOMPANYING ARC

STORY BY
RYUKISHI07

ART BY
KARIN SUZURAGI

Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY
FESTIVAL
ACCOMPANYING ARC

Higurashi WHEN THEY CRY
FESTIVAL ACCOMPANYING ARC

3

CONTENTS

19 HOPES AND SCHEMES 5

20 THE STRENGTH OF ALL 47

21 REUNION 83

22 KURAUDO OOISHI 123

23 OPERATION FORTY-EIGHT HOURS 165

24 EVE OF THE FINAL BATTLE 217

25 THE BATTLE BEGINS 263

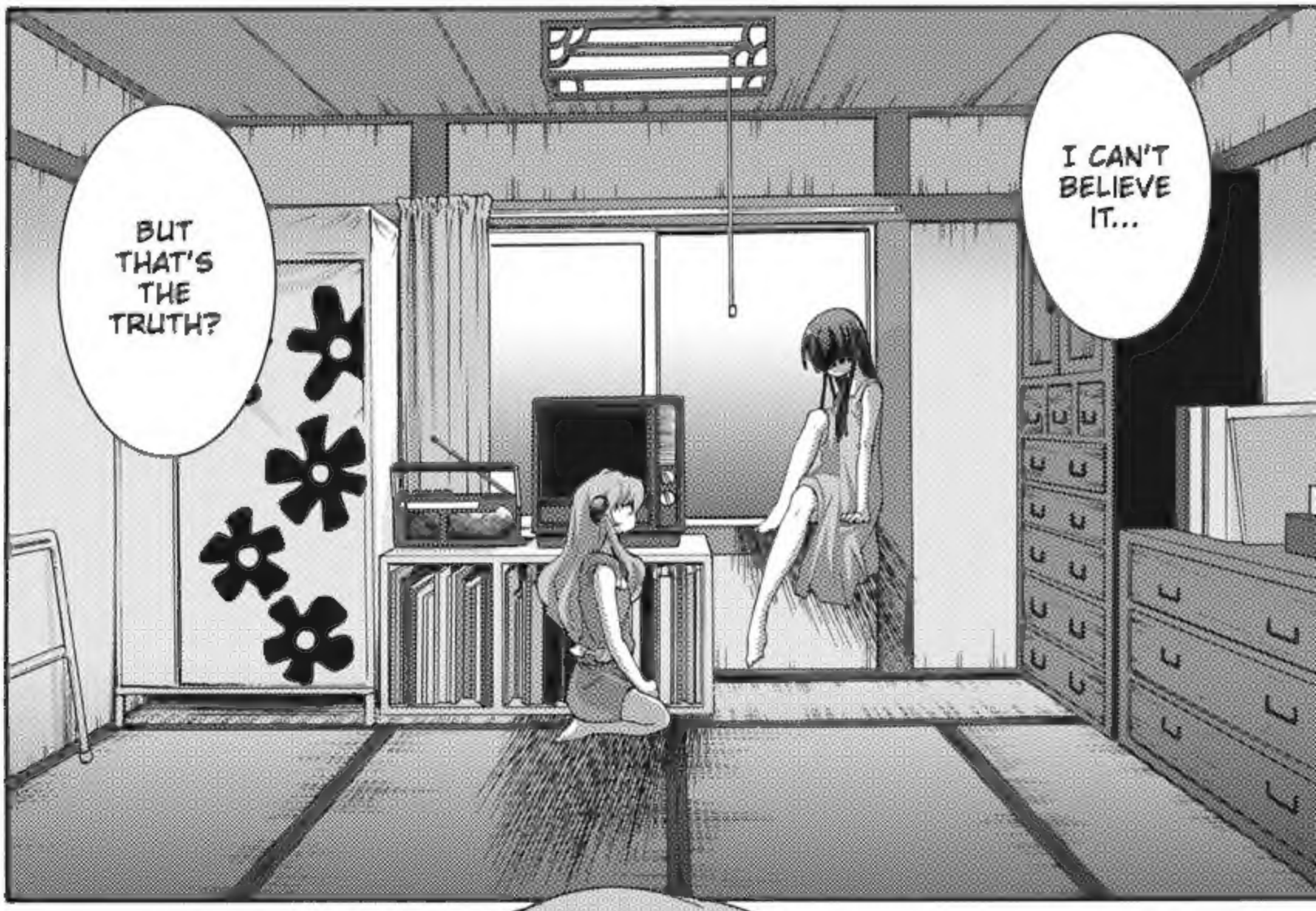
26 ESCAPE 325

27 BATTLE AT THE SONOZAKI ESTATE 369

28 I'M HERE TO HELP YOU 427

CHAPTER 19: HOPES AND SCHEMES

SUYA (ZZZZ)
SUYA


BUT THAT'S THE TRUTH?
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...

THE ONE CLAIMING TO BE OYASHIRO-SAMA, ENACTING THE CURSE, KILLING YOU EVERY TIME...
YES, SIR.

YOU AND I BOTH SAW HER PLAIN AS DAY, SIR.

IT WAS TAKANO, SIR.

THAT MUST BE WHY THIS HAPPENED, SIR. I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH POWER TO REWIND YOU.

BUT MY POWER IS WEAKEN-ING...

WHY DOES TAKANO KILL ME?

.....

I STILL DON'T UNDER-STAND...

TO THINK YOU WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO REMEMBER THE LAST WORLD...

ISN'T THAT WHY THE IRIE INSTITUTE AND THE WILD DOGS PROTECT ME?

I'M THE QUEEN CARRIER. MY DEATH WOULD MEAN DISASTER.

IF THAT WERE TO HAPPEN, ALL TWO THOUSAND RESIDENTS OF HINAMIZAWA WOULD GROW PARANOID AND SUSPICIOUS AND KILL EACH OTHER. IT WOULD BE A DISASTER OF UNPRECEDENTED PROPORTIONS.

THEY SAY THAT IF THE QUEEN CARRIER DIES...

...EVERYONE IN THE VILLAGE WILL BREAK OUT IN THE TERMINAL SYMPTOMS OF HINAMIZAWA SYNDROME...

BUT THIS IS THE MOST CLASSIFIED OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.

THE EXISTENCE OF HINAMIZAWA SYNDROME IS CAREFULLY CONCEALED FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD.

...THE IRIE INSTITUTE'S SECRET FORCE, THE WILD DOGS, KEEPS CLOSE WATCH OVER ME.

SO TO MAKE SURE NOTHING HAPPENS TO ME...

THE WILD DOGS ARE AGAINST US TOO.

I DIDN'T LEARN WHETHER IRIE IS OUR ENEMY OR NOT...BUT I THINK THAT HE IS NOT.

IS TAKANO OUR ONLY ENEMY?

UHH, UHH... I DON'T KNOW, SIR.

SO WHY ...?

WE'RE UP AGAINST TAKANO AND THE WILD DOGS...

.....!

AND THE COTTON DRIFTING IS NEXT SUNDAY.

綿流

HOW ARE TWO LITTLE GIRLS LIKE US SUPPOSED TO FIGHT THEM?

THIS IS NO LAUGHING MATTER. THEY HAVE TOKYO AND ITS POLITICAL INFLUENCE BEHIND THEM.

I HAVE ONE WEEK.

I WILL BE KILLED ON THE 22ND.

IT'S IMPOS-SIBLE...WE KNOW WHO OUR ENEMIES ARE, BUT THEY'RE...

...THEY'RE MUCH TOO POWER-FUL...!

GYU (CLENCH)

SO (PRESS)

IN THAT WORLD, TEPPEI HOJO CAME BACK.

TEPPEI ...

...THE WORST KIND OF WORLD...

RIKA, PLEASE LISTEN.

IN THE LAST WORLD, WE LEARNED AN IMPORTANT LESSON.

...AND AMBUSHED TEPPEI, RIGHT?

...AND I BET KEIICHI OR SHION OR ONE OF OUR FRIENDS SUCCUMBED TO HINAMIZAWA SYNDROME ...

NO. THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN, SIR.

WHAT?

IN A MATTER OF DAYS, SATOKO WAS MENTALLY DESTROYED.

NO MATTER WHAT WE DID, THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER WANTED TO "WAIT AND SEE."

THERE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN A WORLD LIKE THAT. I DON'T BELIEVE IT

YOU'RE LYING

EVEN WHEN WE THOUGHT THINGS WOULD BE OKAY, EVERYTHING ALWAYS ENDED IN FAILURE. ALWAYS.

IN EVERY OTHER WORLD, KEIICHI OR SHION OR RENA FELL VICTIM TO THE DISEASE.

...RIKA.

THERE IS A WAY TO KEEP THE SYMPTOMS AT BAY, SIR.

WE NEVER FOUND A WAY TO BREAK THE DEADLOCK!

...AND REALLY SAVED SATOKO THE PROPER WAY, SIR.

THEY APPEALED TO THE CONSULTATION CENTER...

IN THAT WORLD, EVERYONE WORKED TOGETHER.

NO ONE TRIED TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM WITH VIOLENCE.

AND IT'S TO GO TO OTHERS FOR HELP, SIR.

WE HAD GIVEN UP...

BUT IN THAT WORLD, KEIICHI TAUGHT US, SIR.

WE NEED TO STOP AGONIZING ON OUR OWN, ASSUMING THAT NOTHING WE TRY WILL WORK ANYWAY. WE NEED TO TALK TO OUR FRIENDS, SIR.

IF WE DO THAT, THE WAY TO A SOLUTION WILL BE OPENED.

THAT'S HOW KEIICHI SAVED SATOKO.

MIRACLES DON'T HAPPEN UNLESS YOU BELIEVE.

AND IF EVERYONE BELIEVES, THE MIRACLE DEFINITELY WILL HAPPEN.

BUT... TALK TO THEM ...?

YOU MEAN, TELL KEIICHI AND THE OTHERS ABOUT TAKANO?

GU (SQUEEZE)

グ..

KEIICHI ...?

TELL THEM, "A SHADY ORGANIZATION CALLED TOKYO IS AFTER ME. I NEED YOUR HELP"?

AND YOU REALLY THINK THEY'LL BELIEVE ME?

.....

THEY BELIEVED IN THE OTHER WORLD, SIR!

THEY WILL BELIEVE YOU, SIR!

UNTIL NOW, I WAS NOTH NG MORE THAN AN OBSERV- ER.

RIKA.

I WAITED IN THE WINGS, REFUSING TO GO ONSTAGE BECAUSE I WAS AFRAID OF GETTING HURT, SIR. BUT I'M TIRED OF THAT

SU (STEP)

SO PLEASE.

THE PLAYERS ARE YOU AND TAKANO.

THIS WILL BE THE LAST GAME PLAYED FOR JUNE 1983.

I WILL BELIEVE WITH EVERY-ONE ELSE.

SO WE WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE A MIRACLE.

THE WILD DOGS ARE JUST ONE OF TAKANO'S MANY POWER-FUL GAME PIECES.

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT HER WITHIN THE TIME LIMIT, YOU WILL AUTO-MATICALLY LOSE.

YOU DON'T HAVE TIME TO WASTE SITTING AROUND, SIR.

YOU CAN'T WIN UNLESS YOU ASK FOR HELP FROM EVERYONE AND COLLECT AN EQUAL NUMBER OF PIECES.

PLEASE, RIKA.

FIGHT...!

HANYU ...

FOR ONE THOUSAND YEARS, SHE DID NOTHING BUT BEAR THE WEIGHT OF THEIR SINS.

ALL SHE COULD DO WAS APOLOGIZE OVER AND OVER.

BECAUSE OF THEIR DEMON BLOOD THE PEOPLE WERE DRIVEN TO MISERY BY MINAMI-ZAWA SYNDROME

AFTER HANYU STOPPED SHOWING HERSELF TO HUMANS SHE SPENT MANY MANY YEARS ALONE

BUT NOW... HANYU...

THANKS TO YOU AND ALL OF OUR FRIENDS, SIR.

YOU'VE CHANGED. HANYU.

HEH...

YES, SIR! THE FIRST THING WE NEED TO DO IS TALK TO ANYONE WE CAN, SIR!

I'LL TALK TO KEICHI AND THE OTHERS IF IT GOES WELL, I MIGHT GET SOME GOOD IDEAS

RIKA ...!

ALL RIGHT

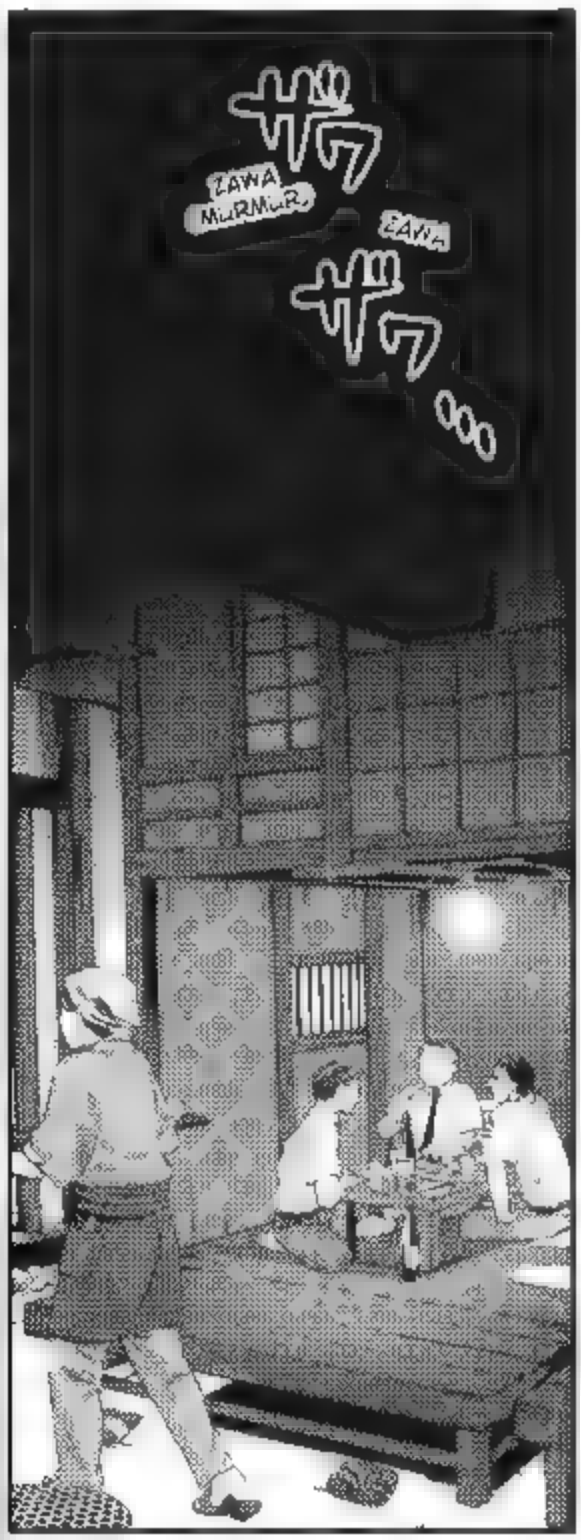
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO HESITATE

THE PATH TO A MIRACLE STARTS WITH ONE STEP!

WE'LL BRING ALL OUR FRIENDS TOGETHER, SIR!

神仙
神仙町通

GOKU (GULP)
ゴク
GOKU
ゴクン
GOKUN


ザワ
ZAWA MURMUR.
ZAWA
ザワ
000

TAN
CTHANKO
レバー
なんこつ
もも
串焼盛合

HEH...

I SEE YOU CAN HOLD YOUR LIQUOR NOW, AKASAKA-SAN.
NN FU FU.

AND YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT, OOISHI-SAN.
ラダ
490
ち点盛
1280

NA HA HA!

I LIKE TO THINK I'VE LOST A LITTLE WEIGHT.

YOU WERE HERE TO INVESTIGATE THAT KIDNAPPING, AKASAKA-SAN?

I OWE OOISHI-SAN A LOT FOR ALL THE HELP HE GAVE ME BACK THEN.

YES, FIVE YEARS AGO.

BUT I HARDLY RECOG-NIZED YOU.

WA-HA-HA! I DO REMEMBER KURAUDO SAYING HE'D PLAYED IN THE WORST MAH-JONG GAME OF HIS LIFE.

HA HA HA

IT ALWAYS MAKES ME HAPPY TO SEE YOUNG PEOPLE MATURE.

YOU SEEM MUCH MORE DEPENDABLE NOW.

WHEN I SEE YOU YOUNG'UNS GROWING INTO SUCH FINE MEN, I SEE IT REALLY IS MY TIME TO MOVE ON.

I'M THINKING OF TAKING MY OLD LADY TO HOKKAIDO TO ENJOY OUR GOLDEN YEARS.

I'LL BE RETIRING MYSELF NEXT YEAR.

NN FU FU!

SO.

YOU'VE GOT A LONG WAY TO GO, KU-MAGAI.

HEY, WHAT ABOUT ME?

YOU'RE MORE RELAXED, AND YOU HAVE MORE PRESENCE.

YOU'VE REALLY BULKED UP.

WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE TODAY?

YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE A MAN WHOSE ONLY PURPOSE IS TO REKINDLE SOME OLD FRIEND-SHIPS.

YOU'RE RIGHT.

トントン
TON TON

THE TRUTH IS...

...I CAME HERE TO SEE A GIRL NAMED RIKA FURUDE.

I CAME ACROSS THE NAME IRIE CLINIC IN SOME POLICE REPORTS...

...AND IT REMINDED ME OF THE GIRL, RIKA FURUDE.

I ONCE CAME TO HINAMIZAWA ON AN INVESTIGATION.

AND SHE WARNED ME THAT IF I DIDN'T GO BACK TO TOKYO, SOMETHING TERRIBLE WOULD HAPPEN.

I SENSED SOMETHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

MY WIFE YUKIE WAS IN THE HOSPITAL, WAITING TO GIVE BIRTH TO OUR DAUGHTER. I CALLED HER AND TOLD HER TO BE EXTRA-CAREFUL.

YUKIE HAD BEEN TAKING WALKS UP TO THE ROOF EVERY DAY, BUT SHE STOPPED.

SOON AFTER THAT...

A TILE CAME LOOSE ON THE STAIRS LEADING UP TO THE ROOF.

THERE WAS AN ACCIDENT, AND ONE OF THE CUSTODIAL WORKERS WAS BADLY HURT.

AND I REMEMBERED ONE MORE OF THE GIRL'S PROPHECIES.

I REMEMBERED ALL ABOUT IT.

...YUKIE'S LIFE WAS SAVED.

BECAUSE OF RIKA FURUDE'S PROPHECY...

...I WILL BE KILLED.

...OR MAYBE A FEW DAYS AFTER...

IN THE NEXT YEAR, 1983, ON THIS DAY IN JUNE...

I HAVE TO FIND OUT.

WILL THAT PROPHECY COME TRUE AS WELL?

YOU MEAN HER PARENTS ARE...?
"LATE" ...?
RIKA FURUDE? YOU MEAN RIKA-CHAMA, THE DAUGHTER OF THE LATE FURUDES?

IN 1981...
...BOTH MR. AND MRS. FURUDE DIED UNDER MYSTERIOUS CIRCUM-STANCES.

...MY PARENTS WILL BE KILLED.
ON THIS DAY IN THE NEXT YEAR, 1981...

FORE-TOLD?

I THINK I PLAYED MAHJONG WITH HIM?

THEN DID THE DAM DIRECTOR PASS AWAY IN '79?

JUST AS SHE FORE-TOLD...

.....

HE WAS KILLED IN A FIGHT WITH HIS WORKERS THAT YEAR.

IT WAS ALL OVER THE PAPERS.

AFTER BEING BRUTALLY KILLED...

...HE WILL BE CUT INTO PIECES AND DISPOSED OF.

OH, SO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT.

...AND WAS HIS BODY CUT INTO PIECES?

WE STILL HAVEN'T FOUND HIS RIGHT ARM...

IT'S JUST AS YOU SAY.

AGAIN!!

THEN IN 1980...

ON THIS DAY IN JUNE 1980...

...SATOKO'S PARENTS WILL BE PUSHED OFF A CLIFF AND DIE.

DID THE PARENTS OF A GIRL NAMED SATOKO DIE IN A FALL?

AND AGAIN ...!

THAT'S RIGHT. MR. AND MRS. HOJO FELL OFF A VIEWING PLATFORM.

YOU'RE VERY WELL-IN-FORMED.

WE WERE ORDERED TO KEEP THE INVESTIGATION OF THE FOURTH YEAR'S MURDER TIGHTLY UNDER WRAPS.

BUT YOU CAN'T KNOW ABOUT THE NEXT ONE.

YOU CERTAINLY KNOW A GREAT DEAL ABOUT OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE.

NO, I KNOW.

YOU MAY BE WITH THE POLICE, BUT YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY KNOW WHAT HAPPENED THAT YEAR.

...HOW DELAYED COULD THE HEAD AND DEATH BE? HMM?

SATOKO'S AUNT WILL HAVE HER HEAD SPLIT OPEN, AND SHE WILL DIE.

ON THIS DAY IN THE NEXT YEAR,

1982— LAST YEAR.

THE AUNT OF THE AFORE-MENTIONED SATOKO...

...BUT THAT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE THE CASE.

I'D SAY HE HAD ACCESS TO THE REPORTS ON THE DEATHS BECAUSE HE'S WITH PUBLIC SECURITY ...

R-RIGHT ON THE NOSE.

HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT, AKASAKA-SAN?

GYU (SQUEEZE)

NO, IT'S NOT.

EH...?

AND I KNOW THE NAME OF THIS YEAR'S MURDER VICTIM.

...IS RIKA FURUDE.

THE ONE WHO WILL BE MURDERED IN JUNE OF 1983...

SHE WILL BE THE NEXT VICTIM.

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

PEOPLE SAY RIKA-CHAMA IS THE REINCARNATION OF OKAMI-SAMA.

EVERYONE IN KAMIZAWA LOVES HER DEARLY.

RIKA-CHAMA?

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?

SHE KNEW IN JUNE 19TH...

...AND SHE TOLD IT ALL TO ME.

IN WHAT...?

...I NEED TO SEE HER.

GATAN (CLATTER)

NN FU FU.

.....

...WERE ALL FORETOLD BY RIKA FURUDE...

THE SERIES OF DEATHS THAT HAVE SHAKEN THE FOUNDATION OF HINAMI-ZAWA...

AKA-SAKA-SAN.

THIS IS STARTING TO GET INTEREST-ING.

LET'S BOTH HEAR WHAT SHE HAS TO SAY.

PLEASE ALLOW ME TO JOIN YOU.

LIKE YOU, I HAVE SWORN TO SOLVE THIS SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS.

ALL RIGHT.

LET'S GO, OOISHI-SAN.

AND WE'LL HEAR IT FROM THE GIRL HERSELF.

THE TRUTH ABOUT RIKA FURUDE...!

Thank you for speaking with me the other day, Major Takano.

(CHIRP)

Thanks to your detailed report, those in the Ministry of Health and Welfare have come to understand just what a threat Hinamizawa Syndrome could be.

Now everything is in place.

NOMURA-SAN...

...WE WILL COMMENCE OPERATION APOCALYPSE.

LATE ON THE NIGHT OF JUNE 22ND... ONE WEEK FROM NOW...

JAPAN WILL FALL INTO A STATE OF PANIC.

THEN, AS IT STATES IN YOUR RESEARCH ...

...THE TWO THOUSAND INFECTED HINAMIZAWA VILLAGERS WILL RIOT WITHIN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS.

34

TO PREVENT SUCH A SCENARIO, THERE WILL BE NO CHOICE BUT TO ENACT *EMERGENCY MANUAL 34*.

I HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL FOLLOW THROUGH.

Operation Apocalypse will be complete.

YOU WILL KILL THE QUEEN CARRIER, R.

MAJOR TAKANO... YOU AND YOUR GRAND-FATHER WILL BECOME GODS.

HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH...

カチ

HEH HEH HEH...

BECAUSE OF IT, MY OWN WORK IS PROGRESS-ING VERY NICELY.

YES, TAKANO-SAN...

...YOUR RESEARCH TRULY IS WONDER-FUL...

...HELLO?

YES, IT'S ME

OPERATION APOCALYPSE IS PROCEEDING AS PLANNED.

THE PRIME MINISTER WILL AUTHORIZE THE USE OF *EMERGENCY MANUAL 34*.

...TAKASHIRO SPEAKING.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP THE OTHER DAY.

THEN THE EXECUTIVE MANSION WILL BE IN THE PALM OF OUR HANDS...

THE OKUNO AND CHIBA FACTIONS THAT FORMERLY SIDED WITH KOIZUMI WILL LOSE MUCH OF THEIR INFLUENCE.

WHEN HE DOES, THE FOOLS CONDUCTING THIS DANGEROUS RESEARCH WILL BE FORCED TO TAKE THE BLAME.

WE WERE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT TO BRING MIYO TAKANO INTO THIS.

SHE'S BEEN A MOST USEFUL PAWN.

WE WILL MAKE OPERATION APOCA-LYPSE A SUCCESS.

HEH-HEH-HEH-HEH-HEH-HEH.

ONE LITTLE VILLAGE IS A SMALL PRICE TO PAY FOR THE ENTIRETY OF JAPAN.

CHAPTER 20: THE STRENGTH OF ALL

A VERY GOOD MORNING TO YOU!

WAI (CHATTER)
ワイ

WAI
ワイ

WAI
ワイ

WAI
ワイ

ぎゅ
GYU (GRIP)

AFTER THE COTTON DRIFTING FESTIVAL... TAKANO WILL KILL ME.

...I WON'T BE ABLE TO OVER-TURN MY DESTINY.

IF I DON'T GET HELP OF MY OWN...

I CAN'T POSSIBLY FIGHT THEM BY MYSELF.

TAKANO HAS POWERFUL BACKERS.

ZAAA (FWSHH)

BUT...

ZAWA

GOOD MORNING!

ZAWA (CHATTER)

GOOD MORNING!

WHAT CAN I DO...?

HOW CAN I GET THEM TO TAKE ME SERIOUSLY?

IT'S SO REMOVED FROM NORMAL, DAILY LIFE... THEY'LL JUST THINK IT'S A JOKE.

IF I TOLD THEM ABOUT HINAMIZAWA SYNDROME AND THAT MY LIFE IS IN DANGER...

HOW ARE YOU ALL DOING TODAY?

ZA (ZSH)

GOOD MORNING, EVERYONE!

I'LL BE GIVING YOU YOUR MONTHLY CHECKUPS TODAY!

IRIE...

IRIE-SENSEI! NONE OF THAT AT SCHOOL, IF YOU PLEASE!

YOU'LL NEED TO BE DISCIPLINED!

わき WAKI (CREEP)

わき WAKI

THAT'S AGAINST SCHOOL RULES.

I SEE YOU DON'T HAVE A MAID HEADBAND ON YOUR HEAD.

...IRIE.

IF I TALK TO IRIE, I CAN GET DIRECTLY TO THE POINT.

HE'S BEEN ON THE INSIDE SINCE THE BEGINNING.

RIGHT... IRIE IS RESEARCHING HINAMIZAWA SYNDROME.

.....?

I WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ALONE, SIR...

保健室

MIIIIN (BUZZ)

MIN MIN MIN MIN

SIGN: MEDICAL OFFICE

TAKANO-SAN IS GOING TO KILL YOU?

NO... THAT'S IMPOS-SIBLE.

NOT SO LOUD, IRIE, SIR.

SHE WOULD BE THE FIRST IN LINE TO PROTECT YOU, RIKA-SAN. FOR THE SAKE OF HER RESEARCH.

AND YOU'RE SAYING SHE'S GOING TO KILL YOU? FOR ONE THING, SHE HAS NO MOTIVE.

TAKANO-SAN IS THE LEADER OF THE HINAMIZAWA SYNDROME RESEARCH INITIATIVE.

TAKANO HAS NO REASON TO KILL ME.

...HE'S RIGHT.

IF THE QUEEN CARRIER DIES, ALL THE VILLAGERS IN HINAMIZAWA WILL BREAK OUT IN THE FINAL STAGES OF THE SYNDROME. IT WOULD BE AN ENORMOUS DISASTER.

AND IF THAT WERE TO HAPPEN, FURTHER RESEARCH ON HINAMIZAWA SYNDROME WOULD BE OUT OF THE QUESTION.

WHA ...?

...IS IT POSSIBLE THAT SHE WOULD KILL ME BECAUSE SHE WANTS TO SEE A VILLAGE-WIDE OUT-BREAK?

YOU ARE EXTREMELY VALUABLE TO HER WORK, RIKA-SAN.

RIGHT.

TAKANO NEEDS ME ALIVE IF SHE WANTS TO CONTINUE HER RESEARCH... RIGHT, SIR?

...BUT STILL, SHE WOULD NEVER DO THAT.

WELL, TAKANO-SAN IS A BIG FAN OF THE OCCULT...

...WE NEVER TOLD YOU THIS, RIKA-SAN...

...BUT EMERGENCY MEASURES HAVE BEEN PUT IN PLACE IN CASE THE VILLAGERS EVER SHOW SIGNS OF A MASS OUT-BREAK.

EMER-GENCY MEA-SURES ...?

IT'S SOMETHING CALLED *EMER-GENCY MANUAL 34.*

IF THE WORST SHOULD HAPPEN, THE SITUATION WILL BE DEALT WITH ACCORD-ING TO THE MANUAL.

...CAN YOU GIVE ME A SPECIFIC IDEA OF WHAT WOULD HAPPEN, SIR?

GU (CLENCH)

...WELL ...

ALL OF THE VILLAGERS...

...WOULD BE KILLED WITH POISON GAS.

IN THREE YEARS, IT WILL BE AS IF HINAMIZAWA SYNDROME NEVER EXISTED

SHE COULDN'T GET THEM TO OVERTURN THE DECISION.

TAKANO-SAN WENT ALL THE WAY TO THE CAPITAL TO PERSUADE THEM TO RECONSIDER... BUT ONLY MET WITH CRITICISM.

AT THE REQUEST OF OUR SUPERIORS THE RESEARCH ON HINAMIZAWA SYNDROME

WILL BE STOPPED WITHIN THREE YEARS

IT'S A DISTURBING THOUGHT I DIDN'T WANT TO TELL YOU

THERE'S ONE MORE REASON TAKANO-SAN WOULD NEVER KILL YOU

AND THEY'VE BEEN ENACTING THAT HORROR EVERY TIME I DIED...?

SO IF I DIE ALL OF HINAMIZAWA WILL BE WIPED OUT?

WHAT ...!?

IF I KNOW TAKANO-SAN...SHE WOULD WANT...

...TO USE THESE THREE YEARS TO TAKE THE RESEARCH AS FAR AS SHE CAN.

NO ONE CARES ABOUT THIS RESEARCH MORE THAN TAKANO-SAN DOES.

.....

MIIIN (BUZZ)

MIN

MIN

MIN

I DON'T KNOW...

I FEEL LIKE THINGS MAKE EVEN LESS SENSE NOW.

RIKA!

DID YOU MAKE ANY PROG-RESS, SIR?

IN FACT, THE VILLAGE WILL BE DESTROYED, AND THERE WILL BE NO HOPE OF CON-TINUING THE RESEARCH.

THERE WON'T BE AN OUT-BREAK IF I DIE.

IF WE CAN'T FIND A MOTIVE FOR TAKANO TO KILL ME, THEN WE CAN'T GET THE GROWN-UPS LIKE IRIE OR TOMITAKE TO BELIEVE ME.

WE HAVE TO DO SOME-THING...

EVEN IF TAKANO WERE TO DO SOME-THING DESPER-ATE, IT'S UNLIKELY THAT SHE WOULD DO IT NOW WHEN SHE STILL HAS THREE YEARS.

TOKYO HAS DECIDED TO CANCEL THE HINAMIZAWA SYNDROME RESEARCH IN THREE YEARS.

HANYU ...

UHH, UHH, UHH!

WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT, THAT'S EXACTLY WHEN YOU NEED TO GO TO YOUR FRIENDS, SIR!

HA!

BA (BAM)

IF I START TALKING ABOUT SOME SECRET SOCIETY CALLED TOKYO...

...THEY'LL JUST ASK ME WHAT MANGA I'VE BEEN READING!

BUT HOW CAN I TELL THEM ABOUT THIS?

YOU JUST ANSWERED YOUR OWN QUESTION, SIR.

UHH!

UHH!♥

...?

DON'T OVERTHINK IT. TELL THEM JUST LIKE THAT. I KNOW EVERYTHING WILL WORK OUT BETTER THAT WAY, SIR.

JUST TELL THEM WHAT I TELL YOU TO SAY!

WHAAAT!!?

M-MEW... TH-THAT'S RIGHT, SIR.

IT'S MY SECRET HOBBY, SIR...

YOU'RE WRITING A MANGA?

I MAY NOT LOOK IT, BUT STORY-BOARDING, ROUGH DRAFTS, INKING, TONE, BACKGROUNDS, TYPESETTING, COPYEDITING, SENDING THINGS TO PRESS, PUB-LISHING—

THIS OLD MAN CAN DO IT ALL!

YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD THIS OLD MAN ALL ABOUT IT! I THOUGHT WE WERE FRIENDS!

I HAD NO IDEA YOU WERE WRITING A MANGA, RIKA!

WHEN DID YOU START DOING THAT...?

MY DAD WAS TALKING ABOUT THAT TOO!

IS SELF-PUBLISHING SOME KIND OF TREND THESE DAYS?

I'M A LITTLE CONCERNED ABOUT MII-CHAN'S FAVORITE GENRES. I AM...

...I WANT TO ASK YOU ALL FOR ADVICE, SIRS.

A...

... AND I...

MHIN (BuZZ)
MIN
MIN
MIN
...
AND YOU'RE HAVING TROUBLE WITH THIS RESEARCHER WHO'S WORKING FOR THIS "TOKYO" SECRET SOCIETY, RIGHT?
A STORY ABOUT A VILLAGE THAT GETS DESTROYED IF THE QUEEN DIES, HUH...?
THAT'S SOME STORY YOU GOT THERE
YES, SIR.
...AND I CAN'T COME UP WITH A MOTIVE FOR THE MURDER.
...SO THAT'S WHAT I'VE THOUGHT OF SO FAR. BUT THE VILLAIN IS TRYING TO KILL THE MAIN GIRL...
YOU'RE GOOD, HANYU...
THEY ALL ACCEPTED MY STORY, JUST LIKE THAT...
HEH...
WHY WOULD SHE DO THAT, SIR...? I CAN'T GET THE PIECES OF THE STORY TO FIT.
...THAT RESEARCHER WOULD PROBABLY LIKE TO KEEP THE RESEARCH GOING LONGER.
BUT SHE'S TRYING TO KILL THE QUEEN CARRIER AND END IT ALL, SIR.

M-MII?

IN OTHER WORDS ...

YOU JUST HAVE TO MAKE THE PLOT THICKER!

KYU (SQUIK)

PACHIN (WINK)

パチン★

WA HA HA HA!

IS THAT ALL? THAT'S A PIECE OF CAKE!

MASTERMIND

KA (TOK)

KA

RESEARCHER

KA

ONE WHO'S TRYING TO USE THE EVIL RESEARCHER FOR HER OWN PURPOSES!

...YOU JUST HAVE TO ADD ANOTHER MASTER-MIND.

A MASTER-MIND WHO'S MANIPU-LATING TAKANO...?

EVEN IF DESTROYING THE VILLAGE WOULDN'T BENEFIT THE RESEARCH-ER...

...YOU JUST HAVE TO MAKE IT BENEFIT THE MASTER-MIND.

I BET OPPOSING FORCES CLASH WITH EACH OTHER EVERY DAY.

IN A BIG ORGANIZATION LIKE THIS "TOKYO," THERE'S SURE TO BE ALL KINDS OF DIFFERENT FACTIONS.

OF COURSE! TONS OF PEOPLE!

IS THERE ANYONE THAT WOULD GAIN FROM DESTROYING AN ENTIRE VILLAGE, SIR?

THAT MEANS THOUSANDS OF VILLAGERS WERE SLAUGHTERED BECAUSE OF FACTION A'S RESEARCH.

BUT THE MAIN CHARACTER DIES, AND THE VILLAGE IS DESTROYED TO CONTROL THE OUTBREAK SITUATION.

SO SAY YOU HAVE FACTION A TRYING TO KEEP THE RESEARCH GOING.

IT WOULD TURN INTO A BIG DEBATE OVER WHO'S AT FAULT.

HEH HEH HEH. EXACTLY.

I GET IT... IF THERE'S A GROUP THAT WANTS TO KICK OUT FACTION A AND TAKE THEIR PLACE...

...MAKING THIS BIG MESS BY KILLING OFF THE MAIN CHARACTER WOULD ONLY BENEFIT THEM.

THEN THE OTHER FACTIONS—ESPECIALLY A'S BIGGEST OPPOSING FORCE—WOULD LOVE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THAT OPPORTUNITY.

FACTION A WOULD LOSE THEIR INFLUENCE, AND THEY'D FALL FROM POWER.

GU (CLENCH)

SO THE STORY GOES LIKE THIS...

...AND SETS HER SIGHTS ON THE DOWN-TRODDEN EVIL RE-SEARCHER.

THAT'S WHEN SOME-ONE FROM FACTION B COMES ALONG, WANTING TO PUSH A OUT OF POWER...

WITH NO HOPE OF SALVA-TION, SHE IS DEEPLY HURT AND SUFFER-ING...

THE RESEARCHER HEARS THAT THE WORK SHE'S SPENT HALF OF HER LIFE ON WILL BE CUT OFF IN THREE YEARS.

SHE MAKES AN APPEAL TO TOKYO, BUT ALL SHE GETS IN RESPONSE IS A TON OF VERBAL ABUSE.

"I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO UNDER-STANDS YOUR RE-SEARCH."

"WE'LL DESTROY THE VILLAGE AND MAKE THOSE IN POWER UNDERSTAND ITS GREAT-NESS."

...AND SHE IS EASILY WON OVER.

THE NORMALLY PROUD AND DAUNTLESS RESEARCHER'S BROKEN HEART IS SHAKEN...

THEN THE RESEARCHER STANDS UP.

"IF SOMEONE IS GOING TO DESTROY MY RESEARCH ANYWAY, THEN I MIGHT AS WELL BE THE ONE TO BURY IT.

"I'LL KILL THE QUEEN AND PUT AN END TO THE RESEARCH MYSELF."

WHAT ...?

TO THINK SHE'D BE ABLE TO DEDUCE SO MUCH WITH SO LITTLE INFORMATION...

SHE'S RIGHT... CONSIDERING TAKANO'S PERSONALITY, THAT'S NOT AN IMPLAUSIBLE THEORY.

BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT THE MASTERMIND WANTS.

UHH...BUT WHY WOULD SHE END THE RESEARCH NOW WHEN SHE STILL HAS THREE YEARS LEFT, SIR?

I THINK THAT NOW WOULD BE THE BEST TIME FOR THEM TO DEAL THE MOST DAMAGE TO FACTION A.

THERE ARE CERTAIN OTHER FACTORS, LIKE THE BEST TIMING TO PRESSURE THE TOP BRASS TO ENACT THE EMERGENCY MANUAL AFTER THE QUEEN IS KILLED...

...AND ADVANCE PREPARATIONS FOR LAYING THE BLAME AFTER THE OPERATION.

...UHH. THAT MAKES SENSE, SIR...

.....

AND THE RESEARCHER WOULDN'T CARE ABOUT THE EXTRA THREE YEARS.

SHE DOESN'T SEE THE THREE YEARS AS A GRACE PERIOD. SHE FEELS MORE LIKE SHE'S BEEN SENTENCED TO DIE IN THREE YEARS.

GOKURI (GULP)

THEY'RE ANALYZING THIS AS IF THEY'VE BEEN WATCHING TAKANO'S EVERY MOVE...

THEY TRULY ARE... AMAZ-ING...

TH-THEN... WILL YOU TELL ME, SIRS?

THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART...

BUT THE HEROINE HAS NO POWER. SHE'S JUST A HELPLESS LITTLE GIRL.
SHE'S FIGHTING AGAINST GROWN-UPS WITH A BIG ORGANIZA-TION ON THEIR SIDE.

THAT IS A HARD ONE.
...SO SHE'S A TRUE-TO-LIFE HEROINE?

...HOW CAN THE HEROINE STAND AND FIGHT AGAINST THIS EVIL ORGANIZA-TION, SIRS?

BUT... SHE HAS TO WIN, NO MATTER WHAT, SIR.

CAN YOU PLEASE TELL ME SOME WAY SHE MIGHT WIN?

HMM ...

WHAT DO YOU THINK, MII, SIR?

YOU KNOW, LIKE IN SHONEN MANGA.

AND WE CAN'T DO SOMETHING LIKE GIVE THE HERO-INE SOME HIDDEN POWER?

.....

REAL-ISM, HUH ...?

W-WE WANT TO STRESS THE REALISM OF THE CHARAC-TERS.

...WE WERE HOPING TO AVOID THAT KIND OF THING, SIR.

PAKIN (SNAP)

IMPOS-
SIBLE.

THE DIFFERENCE IN POWER IS JUST A BIT TOO MUCH.

I MEAN, SHE'S UP AGAINST THAT BIG "TOKYO" ORGANIZATION, RIGHT?

THEIR INTELLIGENCE NETWORK AND PERSONAL CONNECTIONS ARE NOTHING TO SNEEZE AT, RIGHT? AND THEY'VE PROBABLY GOT SOME SPECIAL FORCES TOO.

AND YOU WANT ONE LITTLE GIRL TO FIGHT AGAINST ALL THAT? IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.

YEAH. THERE'S JUST NOTHING IN THERE THAT COULD HELP HER WIN.

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!

I KNOW, RIGHT? EVEN THIS OLD MAN'D HAVE A HARD TIME WITH THAT SITUATION.

NO...

GYU (GRIP)

IT WOULD BE ONE THING IF SHE TURNED OUT TO BE AN S-RANK HUNTER WHO COMES FROM A LONG LINE OF ROYALTY.

HA-HA-HA. WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

OKAY, THEN, HOW ABOUT THIS?

YOU HAVE A COMBAT EXPERT, WHO CAN HANDLE ANY WEAPON AND LEAD A PLATOON...

GU (CLENCH)

...AND A GIRL WITH THE SPECIAL ABILITY TO CONFUSE ENEMY TROOPS WITH NOTHING BUT HER OWN ORIGINAL TRAPS...

PON (PAT)

...AS THE HEROINE'S FRIENDS.

HEH-HEH-HEH! YOU COULD SAY THAT!
WHAT? THAT'S LIKE SAYING THE GIRL COULD SOLVE EVERYTHING IF SHE WAS JUST FRIENDS WITH YOU AND SATOKO!

TRAPS DO HAVE A WEAKNESS IN THAT THEY TAKE TIME TO SET UP.
BUT SINCE THERE ARE A BUNCH SET UP IN THE BACK MOUNTAIN ALREADY, THE HEROINE CAN JUST ESCAPE THERE.
IF SHE HOLES UP THERE, THE ENEMY WON'T BE ABLE TO GET TO HER SO EASILY.

IT'S TRUE THAT MY TRAP ENGINEERING COULD STOP ANY SECRET FORCE THAT COMES MY WAY!
OH HO HO!

I'LL SNEAK AROUND BEHIND THE APPROACHING ENEMY AND LAUNCH A SURPRISE ATTACK ON THEIR MAIN CAMP!

IT WON'T JUST BE A DEFENSIVE BATTLE. WE'LL GO ON THE OFFENSE AND WIN!

BISHI (POINT)

BA (FWP)

BUT WITH THIS OLD MAN IN CHARGE, IT WON'T BE YOUR AVERAGE, RUN-OF-THE-MILL HIDEOUT OPERATION!

WE CAN HELP TOO! WE CAN!

HEY, THAT'S NOT FAIR! YOU TWO CAN'T TAKE ALL THE GLORY!

...WH ...

...WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? IT'S SO SIMPLE ...

THEN LET'S MAKE ALL OF US THE MAIN CHARACTERS OF THIS MANGA, SIRS!

GLI (GLOMP)

WE'LL ALL WORK TOGETHER TO TAKE DOWN THE ENEMY!

KEE HEE HEE! THAT EVIL ORGANI-ZATION'S OUT OF LUCK!

NO ONE COULD EVER BEAT US IN A FIGHT IN THIS VIL-LAGE!

HEY, DOES THAT MEAN IT'S OUR CLUB VERSUS AN EVIL ORGANIZA-TION?

YEAH! I WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY!

I KNOW MION'S LEADERSHIP SKILLS, RENA'S ATHLETIC ABILITIES, AND KEIICHI'S CLEVER-NESS.

I'VE SEEN IT ALL IN THE MANY YEARS I'VE SPENT IN THIS CLUB.

I KNOW HOW INCREDIBLE SATOKO'S MOUNTAIN TRAPS ARE.

...THAT THEY ARE.

SEE, RIKA? EVERYONE IS SO RELIABLE, SIR.

...THEN MAYBE... EVEN THE WILD DOGS...

IF I CAN FIGHT ALONGSIDE THEM AND ON MY HOME TURF IN HINAMI-ZAWA...

WHY DIDN'T I COME TO THEM SOONER?

...I HAVE SUCH POWERFUL ALLIES.

YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DO IT BY YOURSELF, BUT WE CAN DO IT IF WE WORK TOGETHER, SIR.

IT MAY BE ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE ON MY OWN...

...BUT IF WE ALL WORK TOGETHER, I KNOW WE CAN MAKE A MIRACLE...

MII. EVERY-ONE.

...I NEED MORE IDEAS, SIRS.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO TO BEAT THIS EVIL PLOT?

I WANT YOU TO GIVE ME ALL THE IDEAS YOU'VE GOT, SIRS...!

CHAPTER 21: REUNION

RIDICU-
LOUS...
THAT'S
IMPOS-
SIBLE...

KANA
(CHIRP)
KANA
KANA

TAKANO-
SAN...IS
TRYING TO
KILL YOU?

AFTER TALKING IT OVER WITH MY FRIENDS, I CALLED IRIE AND TOMITAKE...

...AND TOLD THEM THAT TAKANO PLANS TO TAKE MY LIFE...

TAKANO-SAN WOULD NEVER DO ANYTHING SO TERRIBLE...

SHE'S BEEN NOTHING BUT KIND TO YOU AND SATOKO-CHAN.

HOW CAN YOU EVEN THINK THAT SHE WOULD KILL YOU?

DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S UNFAIR TO TAKANO-SAN...?

TOMI-TAKE.

I AGREE. IN HER RIGHT MIND, TAKANO WOULD NEVER DREAM OF KILLING ME, SIR.

TAKANO MUST BE VERY HURT, SIR.

!

IN HER RIGHT MIND ...?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

...AND NOW SHE ONLY HAS THREE YEARS TO FINISH IT.

TAKANO IS UNDER A LOT OF PRESSURE RIGHT NOW.

SHE'S SPENT HER WHOLE LIFE ON THIS RESEARCH...

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT...?

IT'S TRUE. TAKANO-SAN IS HURT...

THEY MADE IT SOUND LIKE IT'S NOTHING BUT A WASTE OF RESOURCES.

...BASED ON WHAT I'VE HEARD, THEY MOCKED THE STUDY RELENTLESSLY.

SHE WENT TO THE CAPITAL TO APPEAL FOR AN EXTENSION.

THE NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS [redacted] DECIDED TO DISCONTINUE THE RESEARCH.

...THE HINAMIZAWA SYNDROME RESEARCH HAS NO FUTURE...

IN OTHER WORDS, DESPITE ALL OF TAKANO'S STRUGGLES...

THEN DON'T YOU THINK IT'S POSSIBLE THAT IF IT'S GOING TO BE STOPPED ANYWAY...

...SHE MAY RESORT TO SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR?

...I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY TAKANO-SAN...MIGHT RESORT TO THAT.

...I...

AND A BROKEN HEART IS EASY TO MANIPULATE.

TAKANO'S MIND IS VERY UNSTABLE RIGHT NOW, SIR.

BUT WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH HER KILLING YOU?

ONE OF THOSE FACTIONS THOUGHT TAKANO WOULD MAKE A GOOD PUPPET.

THIS "TOKYO" THAT TAKANO IS A PART OF— THERE ARE MANY POWERS SWIRLING AROUND INSIDE IT.

THERE ARE FACTIONAL DISPUTES, AREN'T THERE, SIR?

AS A RESULT, *EMERGENCY MANUAL 34* WILL BE ENACTED, AND HINAMI-ZAWA WILL BE DESTROYED.

34

...SHE WILL WORK WITH THE WILD DOGS TO KILL THE QUEEN CARRIER, SIR.

AND UNAWARE THAT SHE IS BEING USED FOR THE MASTERMIND'S PLOT...

THERE MUST BE SOMEONE OUT THERE WHO STANDS TO GAIN A LOT FROM SUCH AN OCCURRENCE, SIR.

TH... THAT'S ...

...WE CAN'T RULE OUT THE POSSIBIL-ITY...

INDEED ...

THE THINGS YOU SAID ABOUT TOKYO...AND ABOUT TAKANO-SAN'S CURRENT STATE OF MIND...

...NOT ENTIRELY IMPLAU-SIBLE...

IF WE SUSPECT ANYONE IN THE SLIGHTEST, WE CAN'T AFFORD TO LET THEM ANYWHERE NEAR YOU.

NOT ONLY THAT, BUT YOU ARE AN IMPORTANT PERSON— THE LIVES OF TWO THOUSAND VILLAGERS DEPEND ON YOU.

IRIE... TOMI-TAKE...

...AND IF I WANT TO TRUST TAKANO-SAN IN THE TRU-EST SENSE, I NEED TO DISPEL ALL DOUBTS.

YOU'VE MADE YOUR POINT, RIKA-CHAN.

I WILL CONTACT TOKYO AND HAVE THEM CONDUCT AN EMERGENCY INVESTIGATION ON TAKANO-SAN AND THE WILD DOGS.

IF WE CAN GRAB TAKANO BY THE TAIL, THEN WE CAN TURN THE WHOLE THING IN OUR FAVOR.

...I'VE MADE ONE STEP FORWARD.

HO (WHEW)

ONE MORE THING.

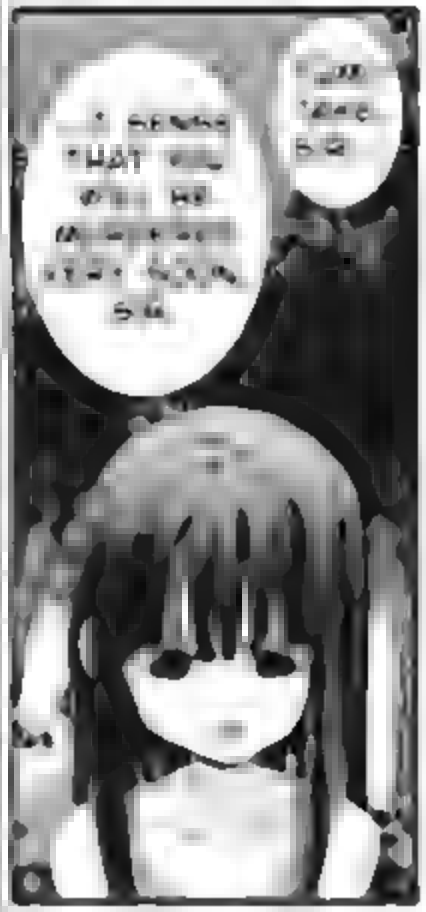
I HAVE A VERY IMPORTANT FAVOR TO ASK YOU...

...BUT THAT'S NOT ENOUGH.

SO I WANT YOU TO BE VERY VERY CAREFUL NO MATTER WHAT SIR.

TOMITAKE DIES EVERY TIME AS THE [illegible] VICTIM OF OYASHIRO-SAMA'S [illegible]

MOST LIKELY IT'S BECAUSE TOMITAKE, THE LIAISON WITH TOKYO, STANDS IN TAKANO'S WAY.



...PLEASE... HEAR ME...!

BUT THIS IS THE LAST WORLD.

YOU NEVER TOOK MY WARNINGS SERIOUSLY. NOT ONCE.

GU GRIT

I UNDER-STAND. I'LL BE EXTRA-CAREFUL.

THANK YOU.

...TOMI-TAKE!

...THIS IS THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE EVER BELIEVED ME, SIR...

THANK YOU FOR BELIEVING ME, SIR!

カナカナカナカナ…

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

OUT OF ALL THE WORLDS I'VE LIVED IN, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME...

I FINALLY GOT TOMITAKE TO LISTEN TO ME!

THE FIRST TIME I GOT THE CLUB MEMBERS TO ANALYZE IT FOR ME...

THE FIRST TIME I HEARD THE SITUATION FROM IRIE...

I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING WHEN I JUST MOPED AROUND BY MYSELF.

BUT WHEN I WENT TO OTHERS FOR ADVICE, EVERYTHING STARTED TO CHANGE ALL AT ONCE.

AND THANKS TO ALL THAT, THE FIRST TIME I MANAGED TO CONVINCE TOMITAKE!

TOMITAKE AND IRIE WILL BE POWERFUL ALLIES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TAKANO.

WITH THEM, MAYBE...!

JARI
RUSTLE

!?

DID THEY HEAR US?

IT CAN'T BE... TAKANO!?

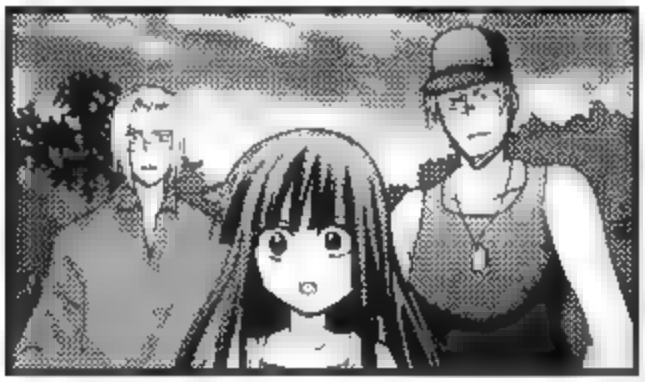
ZA SHFF

SOME-ONE'S THERE ...!?

ZA SKSH
NN FU FU...
WELL, ISN'T THIS AN UNUSUAL ASSORTMENT.

OOISHI ...!
HELLO, EVERYONE.

ZAAAAA (FWSHHH)



...BUT I CAN'T HAVE THEM TAKING ANY OFFENSIVE ACTION NOW WHILE I'M TRYING TO OUTWIT TAKANO.

NOT ONLY COULD THEY COMPLICATE EVERYTHING...

THE POLICE CAN'T KNOW ABOUT THIS NOW.

...HOW UNLUCKY COULD I BE...?

...OOISHI... WE'RE BUSY RIGHT NOW, SIR.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY, THEN COME BACK LATER, SIR.

MY, MY, THAT'S NOT VERY NICE.

I CAME HERE TODAY FOR ONLY ONE REASON.

I'VE BROUGHT AROUND AN OLD FRIEND OF YOURS, RIKA-SAN.

I WONDER IF YOU REMEMBER HIM.

AN OLD FRIEND...?

...EH?

!

AFTER HE CAME ALL THIS WAY... IF YOU FORGOT HIM, HE MIGHT JUST CRY.

BUT ...

...WHO ELSE...

ALL RIGHT, COME ON OUT!

IT CAN'T BE...

IT CAN'T BE... NO...

IT'S UNTHINK-ABLE...

IT'S IMPOS-SIBLE...

HE WOULDN'T BE HERE IN JUNE 1983...

...COULD IT BE?

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

RIKA-CHAN.

YOU'RE NOT GONNA TELL ME TO GO BACK TO TOKYO THIS TIME, ARE YOU?

AHH...

WH...

...WHY... ARE YOU HERE...?

BUT IF I HADN'T REMEMBERED, I'M SURE I WOULD'VE REGRETTED IT IMMENSELY.

...NO, ACTUALLY, MAYBE I HAD FORGOTTEN.

RIKA-CHAN... YOU ASKED ME TO HELP YOU.

AND I REMEMBERED.

...I FINALLY REMEMBERED.

...I FEEL LIKE I REALLY HAD FORGOTTEN FOR A LONG TIME.

BUT...

I'M SORRY I MADE YOU WAIT FOR SO LONG.

AND NOW, IN THE VERY LAST WORLD...

...HOW NICE OF YOU TO FINALLY SHOW UP RIGHT IN THE FRICKING NICK OF TIME, SIR!

.....

...Y... YOU REALLY DID...

...KEEP ME WAITING A LONG DAMN TIME, SIR...

GU (CLENCH)

— NH!

AKA-
SAKA!!

RIKA-CHAN...

I WILL ALWAYS BE ON YOUR SIDE, NO MATTER WHAT.

I'LL BELIEVE ANYTHING YOU SAY, NO MATTER HOW STRANGE.

GU (SQUEEZE)

あああああああ

YES, SIR...

...YES...

I WILL FIND WHOEVER IT IS TRYING TO KILL YOU, AND I WILL DESTROY THEM.

UNH, UNH...

UNNN-NHHH...

O-OOISHI-SAN!

N-NO, IT'S NOTHING LIKE THAT...!

NN-FU-FU. I DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING. I DON'T KNOW A SINGLE THING...

...ABOUT YOU TWO-TIMING YOUR WIFE IN TOKYO WITH A YOUNG, LOCAL SECOND WIFE HERE IN HINAMI-ZAWA.

MY NAME IS MAMORU AKASAKA. I WORK IN REFERENCE ROOM 7 AT THE PUBLIC SECURITY OFFICE.

HA-HA-HA-HA... I HAD NO IDEA RIKA-CHAN HAD SUCH A GREAT BOY-FRIEND ...

REFERENCE ROOM 7?

I...I'M SORRY, SIR. I JUST MISSED YOU SO MUCH, I LOST CONTROL OF MYSELF, SIR...

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, RIKA-CHAN?

I DIDN'T THINK ANYONE HERE WOULD KNOW THE TRUE IDENTITY OF THE PUBLIC SECURITY REFERENCE ROOMS.

...YOU'RE WELL-INFORMED.

IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN, AREN'T THE CAPITAL'S "PUBLIC SECURITY REFERENCE ROOMS" ACTUALLY CODE FOR TOP SECRET SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS TEAMS?

!

JUDGING FROM WHAT I HEARD EARLIER, I ASSUME THERE'S MORE TO YOU THAN MEETS THE EYE.

NN FU FU!

TOMITAKE-SAN, CONSIDERING THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU WOULD GIVE US A REAL INTRODUCTION?

I'M JUST A BIT OF AN ENTHUSIAST. IT'S A FACT I HAPPENED ACROSS, THAT'S ALL...!

N-NO, HA-HA-HA-HA!

IRIE-SENSEI.

O-OH NO, I'M NOT. PHOTOG-RAPHY IS ONLY A HOBBY. I'M JUST...

I NEVER REALLY BELIEVED YOUR "I'M JUST A TRAVELING PHOTOG-RAPHER" ACT.

NO, NO, I WAS JUST DOING MY JOB.

OH, YOU'RE THE...

THANK YOU FOR TAKING SUCH GOOD CARE OF ME.

WE MET FIVE YEARS AGO.

I'M NOT SURE, I...

...W-WELL...

...IS THAT RIGHT?

AND YOUR IRIE CLINIC HAS ANOTHER NAME: THE...IRIE INSTI-TUTE?

I ALREADY KNOW THAT EVERY YEAR, THOSE MASTER-MINDS...

...REDIRECT A LOT OF THAT MONEY INTO THE IRIE INSTITUTE.

...YOU SEE, UNTIL RECENTLY, MY DIVISION...

...WAS DOING A PRIVATE INVES-TIGATION ON LARGE SLUSH FUNDS AND THE MASTERMINDS CONTROLLING WHERE THAT MONEY WENT.

INCLUDING ONE LIEUTENANT COLONEL KYOSUKE IRIE. CHECK HIS NAME.

.....

...AND THE TOP MEMBERS OF THE IRIE INSTITUTE CAME FROM THE JAPAN SELF-DEFENSE FORCES.

...IRIE-SENSEI. TOMI-TAKE-SAN.

ZA (SKSH)

N-NO! I'M NOT IN THE SELF-DEFENSE FORCES!

IT'S IN NAME ONLY...

I-IRIE-SENSEI! YOU'RE FROM THE SELF-DEFENSE FORCES!?

LIEU-TEN-ANT COLO-NEL!

LET'S STOP HIDING THINGS FROM EACH OTHER.

WE HEARD EVERY-THING!

SU- (SSK)

...TOMI-TAKE-SAN.

.....

I THINK EVADING THEIR QUESTIONS ANY LONGER WILL ONLY MAKE THEM SUSPECT US.

...REGARDLESS OF WHAT OUR CLIENT MAY BE UP TO, WE OURSELVES HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING TO FEEL ASHAMED OF.

LET'S TELL THEM.

...OKAY.

BUT THIS CONVERSATION DOES NOT LEAVE THESE GROUNDS...

カナカナカナ…

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

WHAT'S HAPPENING...?

カナカナカナ…

KANA

KANA

KANA

...ARE COMING TOGETHER... AND TALKING EVERYTHING OVER.

GROWN-UPS WHO NEVER HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH EACH OTHER BEFORE...

AKASAKA, OOISHI, TOMITAKE, IRIE...

I'VE NEVER SEEN A WORLD LIKE THIS BEFORE ...

...IS THIS A MIRACLE...?

...SEE?

MIRACLES DO HAPPEN, SIR.

IF WE KEEP WORKING TOGETHER LIKE THIS, DO YOU THINK MORE MIRACLES WILL HAPPEN?

THEY DO HAPPEN. WE CAN MAKE THEM HAPPEN ...

HANYU...

THINK WE CAN MAKE A MIRACLE BIG ENOUGH

AND...

YES SIR WE CAN

IF WE ALL JOIN HANDS, WE CAN MAKE ANY MIRACLE HAPPEN. I KNOW IT.

CHAPTER 22: KURAUDO OOISHI

...THE IRIE INSTITUTE, EMERGENCY MANUAL 34...

HINAMIZAWA SYNDROME, THE QUEEN CARRIER...

...STARTED TELLING AKASAKA AND OOISHI ALL THE SECRETS OF HINAMIZAWA.

IRIE AND TOMITAKE...

...HAVE COME TOGETHER TO TALK EVERYTHING OVER.

GROWN-UPS WHO HAD NOTHING IN COMMON...

I'VE NEVER SEEN A WORLD LIKE THIS BEFORE...

OOISHI-SAN, EVERYTHING THEY SAY IS PLAUSIBLE.

I CAN EASILY IMAGINE A FACTION DEVISING SOME TERRIBLE PLOT.

RIKA-CHAN MAY INDEED BE RIGHT.

I SEE...

...ON THE OTHER HAND, I FEEL LIKE I'VE JUST HEARD THE SUMMARY OF SOME NOVEL...

HMMM...

CASES THAT DEFY COMMON SENSE DON'T SURPRISE ME.

I'M IN A SPECIAL CLASS OF POLICE.

YOU BELIEVE ME, AKA-SAKA, SIR?

AA"

TATA (TROT)

...I HOPE YOU'LL PARDON MY SAYING SO, BUT...

SO...

I CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL LIKE THIS CASE IS TOO BIG.

OOISHI-SAN.

...YOU HAD BETTER STAY OUT OF THIS.

YOU'RE RETIRING THIS YEAR,

AND YOU'RE ABOUT TO COLLECT YOUR PENSION.

YOUR LONG, DANGEROUS CAREER IS COMING TO AN END.

ONE FALSE MOVE COULD CHANGE YOUR ENTIRE LIFE AS A POLICE OFFICER.

BUT... THE ENEMY IN THIS CASE IS TOO BIG.

YOUR WHOLE FUTURE WILL BE MAJORLY AFFECTED BY WHETHER OR NOT YOU GET THAT RETIREMENT MONEY.

...AND FINANCE THE SECOND PHASE OF YOUR LIFE.

YOU'LL BE ABLE TO PAY OFF YOUR MORTGAGE, SAVE FOR YOUR OLD AGE...

MONEY IS IMPOR-TANT.

I SEE.

.....

IAA (FSHH)

IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?

SO IF I'M NOT READY TO LOSE EVERY-THING—

—MY JOB, MY PENSION, EVERY-THING—I NEED TO BACK OUT.

OOISHI ...

NN-FU-FU. THAT'S ALL RIGHT.

I APOLO-GIZE FOR BEING SO BLUNT...

ONLY OOISHI, WHO'S WALKED DOWN THE PATH OF HIS LIFE FOR SO MANY DECADES, CAN UNDERSTAND THE WEIGHT OF THAT LOSS.

LOSING EVERY-THING AT OOISHI'S AGE...

...THEN I COULD STAND HERE AND TELL YOU STRAIGHT UP THAT I'M NOT AFRAID OF A LITTLE REPRIMAND.

...IF I HAD LIVED A LITTLE SMARTER ...

...I ALWAYS WAS PRETTY LAX ABOUT PAYING OFF MY LOANS.

PEN-SION, HUH...?

ALL BECAUSE I WANTED SOME OF MY SALARY TO PAY FOR GAMBLING AND BOOZE.

NO...

I MEAN... I'M A DETECTIVE.

IT'S NOT ABOUT BEING A DETECTIVE. NONE OF THAT MATTERS ANYMORE.

I SWORE IN FRONT OF OYASSAN'S GRAVE...

...I WOULD DO WHATEVER IT TOOK TO FIND OYASSAN'S KILLER.

...THAT EVEN IF I WAS THROWN OUT OF THE FORCE...

AND YOU THINK I... WOULD BE SCARED OF A LITTLE DISCIPLINARY DISCHARGE?

THAT I WOULD BE AFRAID TO SEE MY PENSION GOING UP IN SMOKE?

...YOU'RE DAMN RIGHT I'M SCARED!

I'M ABOUT TO GET TENS OF MILLIONS OF YEN! I HAVE A WHOLE FUTURE PLANNED AROUND THAT MONEY! AND I COULD LOSE IT Aaa!!

I WAS GOING TO [illegible] MONEY TO PAY OFF MY HOUSE AND TAKE MY MOTHER TO HOKKAIDO, WHERE WE'D LIVE A LEISURELY LIFE, TENDING OUR VEGETABLE GARDEN.

I WAS GOING TO LIVE IT UP IN SUSUKINO AND TAKE UP SOCIAL DANCING!

WHAT'S SO SCARY ABOUT LOSING ALL OF THAT!?

NOW I'M FINALLY ABOUT TO GET THAT CRUMMY LITTLE HAND-OUT!

THROUGH [illegible] AND [illegible] THROUGH HARASSMENT FROM MY SUPERIORS AND SENIOR OFFICERS, I [illegible] GRITTED MY TEETH AND BORE IT!

I KEPT MY MOUTH SHUT AND KEPT DOING MY JOB, EVEN THOUGH IT WASN'T NEARLY WORTH THE Aaa!

IS THAT ALL MY DETECTIVE SPIRIT AMOUNTS TO!?

AND YOU EXPECT ME TO PROTECT MYSELF SO I CAN KEEP MY PEN-SION!?

I COULD EXPOSE THE TRUTH BEHIND THE SERIES OF MYS-TERIOUS DEATHS IN HINA-MIZA-WA!

THE DOOR TO TRUTH THAT I'VE WANTED SO BADLY I SEE IT IN MY DREAMS— AND IT'S RIGHT HERE IN FRONT OF ME!

ZAAAAA (FWSHHH)

T

T

D-

GIRI (GRIP)

DAM-MIT...

DAM-MIT...!

WHY CAN'T I SAY I'M READY TO QUIT THE FORCE ANY TIME I FEEL LIKE IT...!?

DAM-MIT...!

OOISHI-SAN.

.....

Y...

...YES...

I SEEM TO REMEMBER... YOU WERE FRIENDS WITH THE CONSTRUCTION DIRECTOR WHO WAS K LLED?

...SO WHEN EVERYTHING IS OVER...

...AND THAT TIME COMES...

IF THE PLOT SURROUNDING RIKA-CHAN IS EXPOSED, THEN THE DAY WILL COME WHEN I AM FORCED TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY.

IT MAY BE IN NAME ONLY, BUT I AM TECHNICALLY THE HEAD OF THE IRIE INSTITUTE.

...I WILL TELL YOU EVERYTHING ABOUT THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS.

SO, OOISHI-SAN, PLEASE DON'T PUSH YOUR-SELF...

PLEASE, LET ME DO THIS, TOMI-TAKE-SAN.

I-IRIE-SEN-SE!!

THANKS, IRIE-SENSE!...

.....

IT WOULD BE WASTED ON THE MISERABLE MAN WHO RUNS AND HIDES, ALL TO PROTECT A MEASLY PENSION.

...BUT PLEASE. SAVE IT FOR THE KURAUDO OOISHI THAT HAD THE COURAGE TO HELP YOU.

OOTSUKA SAN

...CAN I HAVE SOME TIME TO THINK?

BUT I DON'T HAVE THE COURAGE

PART OF ME WANTS TO EXPOSE THE TRUTH AND TAKE DOWN THE BAD GUYS

OOISHI

A LITTLE TIME...

...FOR THE SPINELESS COWARD.

GU ENCHO

...I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM SO WEAK.

.....

I'VE SEEN OOISHI IN SO MANY WORLDS BEFORE NOW.

BUT...

...NH...

THERE'S NOTHING I CAN SAY...

NOT EVEN ANY TRITE WORDS OF COMFORT OR ENCOURAGE-MENT...

AND HE CAN'T REACH OUT AND GRAB IT. IT'S KILLING HIM.

THE TRUTH HE'S BEEN LONGING FOR IS RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM.

I ALLOW IT.

THERE'S NOTHING...

...ANY OF US CAN—

HA-NYU ...!

YOU NEED TIME TO MAKE YOUR DECI-SION.

I WILL LET YOU HAVE IT.

I HAVE WATCHED YOU IN HINAMIZAWA THROUGH ALL OF IT.

I KNOW WELL THE WEIGHT OF THOSE CHERISHED DAYS.

TO THIS VERY DAY...

OO-ISHI.

...YOU HAVE BEEN TRUE TO YOUR-SELF AND ALSO HARD ON YOUR-SELF.

THAT'S HOW YOU'VE LIVED YOUR LIFE.

...SHE HAS WATCHED OVER THE PEOPLE HERE.

FOR A THOU-SAND YEARS...

HANYU IS THE GUARD-IAN DEITY OF HINAMI-ZAWA.

HA-NYU ...

...OOISHI'S LIFE TOO.

SHE WATCHED OVER...

THAT IS EXACTLY WHY HANYU CAN SAY THAT—

WHY SHE CAN SPEAK TO OOISHI.

...AS LONG AS YOU'VE THOUGHT LONG AND HARD ABOUT THAT DECISION...

...I WILL PRAISE YOU FOR IT.

THAT IS EXACTLY WHY, WHEN YOU [redacted] EITHER.

THE WEIGHT OF YOUR LIFE IS NOT INSIGNIFICANT.

THAT IS SOMETHING TO BE TRULY PROUD OF.

AFTER LIVING A LIFE OF SUCH GRAVITY AS YOU HAVE AND THEN HAVING TO MAKE A DECISION OF THIS MAGNITUDE—

CARELESS CHOICES AND RECKLESSNESS ARE NOT THINGS TO BE PROUD OF.

WHETHER YOU MAKE THE BRAVE, HEROIC CHOICE...

OR WHETHER YOU MAKE THE CALM, LEVEL-HEADED CHOICE...

THANK YOU... FOR GIVING THIS COWARD SOME TIME.

— GH...

OO-ISHI...

THANK YOU, LITTLE GIRL I'VE NEVER MET.

SOMEHOW, THOSE ARE THE WORDS... THAT I MOST WANTED TO HEAR.

...THOSE GUYS WHO KILLED OYASSAN AND CUT HIM INTO PIECES. ALL THIS TIME, I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING THE CASE...

...THINKING THE SONO-ZAKI'S WERE PULLING THE STRINGS.

...IRIE-SENSEI. JUST TELL ME ONE THING.

IS THAT CORRECT ...?

NO. THAT IS INCOR-RECT.

EVERY ASPECT OF THE MYSTERIOUS DEATHS IS SOMETHING THE IRIE INSTITUTE CAN EXPLAIN.

..THE INCIDENTS THAT PEOPLE CALL OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE SONOZAKIS...

.. THE THREE FAMILIES, OR ANY OF THE VILLAGERS, SIR.

THE TRUTH IS, THEY ARE ACTUALLY AFRAID OF THE MURDERS THAT HAPPEN EVERY YEAR, SIR.

THE SONOZAKIS ONLY ACT LIKE THEY ARE THE MASTER-MINDS TO INCREASE THEIR FAMILY'S REPUTE.

STRINGING ME ALONG LIKE THAT...!

...DAMN YOU, ORYOU-BAASAN...

.....

...I... SEE...

...BUT I WAS WAY OFF THE MARK THIS WHOLE TIME.

HEH...

HERE I'VE HATED THE SONOZAKIS FOR YEARS NOW...

HEH...

HEH HEH HEH...

ZA (SKSH)

HAAA HA HA HA!

HA HA HA!

HA HA HA!

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!

HATED THE [illegible] FAMILY FOR A VERY [illegible] TIME.

[illegible] SEEM SO LAME?

IT'S A HARD THING TO SPEND SO MUCH TIME HATING.

AND...

IT'S A NICE PEACEFUL FEELING, SIR.

NOW, THEN...

OOISHI LEFT. HE SAID HE WANTED TO COOL HIS HEAD.

YES...I'LL CHANGE HOTELS AND MAKE SURE NOT TO TELL ANYONE AT THE IRIE INSTITUTE.

IF SHE DOES TURN OUT TO BE WHAT WE SUSPECT, THEN YOU WILL BE THE FIRST ONE IN DANGER.

TOMITAKE-SAN. WHEN YOU INVESTIGATE MS. TAKANO, PLEASE BE VERY CAREFUL.

...BUT I'M MOST WORRIED ABOUT RIKA-CHAN'S SAFETY.

HANYU, WHAT DO YOU THINK I SHOULD DO...?

WHAT DO I DO...?

SHE KNOWS WHERE YOU LIVE. IT WOULDN'T BE WISE TO STAY THERE.

YOU WOULD BE TOO DEFENSELESS...

WHY NOT THE BASEMENT AT THE SONOZAKI ESTATE, SIR?

MION'S HOUSE ..?

IF I WENT THERE ...

THE SONOZAKIS' BASEMENT IS LIKE A FULLY STOCKED, SECRET BOMB SHELTER.

THE COTTON DRIFTING IS THREE DAYS AWAY.

...AT THE VERY LEAST, I THINK YOU SHOULD SEEK REFUGE IN A SAFE PLACE UNTIL THE FESTIVAL!!

IF WE WERE TO COMPARE THIS SITUATION TO SHOGI, YOU WOULD BE AN EXPOSED KING.

YES, THAT MIGHT WORK.

...I THINK I'LL ASK MION IF SATOKO AND I CAN HIDE OUT AT HER HOUSE, SIR.

I'LL PRETEND TO BE SICK SO I CAN SKIP SCHOOL TOO, SIR.

IT'S ALL WELL AND GOOD FOR YOU TO GO INTO HIDING...

...BUT IF THE LIGHTS AT YOUR HOUSE DON'T COME ON AT NIGHT, THEY'LL KNOW THAT NO ONE IS THERE, SIR.

ZAA-WSH

BUT RIKA, THERE'S JUST ONE PROBLEM...

RIGHT ...

SO WE NEED SOMEONE TO BE AT THE HOUSE TO TURN THE LIGHTS ON AND OFF.

I HAVE AN IDEA, SIR.

BUT... IS THERE ANYONE WE COULD ASK TO DO THAT?

?

WE CAN JUST HAVE AKASAKA...

...STAY AT YOUR HOUSE, SIR!

UHH!♥

HUH?

...N...

...STAY AT MY HOUSE...?

AKA-SAKA...

かお

I COULD NEVER, EVER, EVER LET AKASAKA INTO MY HOUSE!!

...N-N-NO, NO! NO, ABSO-LUTELY NOT!!

KAAAA (BLUSH)

あぁ、

HE CAN'T, HE CAN'T! NO, NO, NO!!

I HAVEN'T CLEANED UP AT ALL! IT SMELLS AND IT'S DIRTY AND IT'S DISGRACE-FUL!

MEW...

UHH...

UHH...

AKASAKA IS STAYING THE NIGHT, UHH, UHH, UHH, UHH! ☆

...WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT YOU STAYING AT MY HOUSE WHILE I'M GONE...?

U-UM...

MEW...

RIKA-CHAN, IS SOME-THING WRONG?

A-AKA-SAKA !!

HE CAN'T, HE CAN'T!!

NO, NO!

MEW! MEW!

...?

I SEE. THAT'S A BRILLIANT IDEA.

(PON (SMAK)

ほっ

くっ、

IF IT'S ALL RIGHT WITH YOU, RIKA-CHAN, THEN LET'S GO AHEAD WITH THAT PLAN.

THEN WE CAN HIDE THE FACT THAT YOU'RE NOT THERE.

IS IT SELFISH OF ME...TO WANT HIM TO BE A LITTLE SHY ABOUT IT?

MEWWWW...

HE AGREED SO QUICKLY...

A-AKA-SAKA...

HE WON'T COME INTO PLAY UNTIL AFTER WE HAVE TAKANO WHERE WE WANT HER.

IRIE IS GOING TO GO ON WITH LIFE AS USUAL.

TOMITAKE IS GOING TO CONTACT HIS SUBORDI-NATES AT TOKYO AND HAVE THEM INVESTIGATE TAKANO.

THE BATTLE PREPA-RATIONS ARE COM-PLETE.

AND THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH.

OOISHI WON'T BE PLAYING AN ACTIVE PART, BUT HE IS ON OUR SIDE.

AND...

ZA (ZSHH)

WILL YOUR ROOMMATE BE OKAY

NO...I THINK HAVING YOU WITH ME WILL MAKE WHAT I SAY MORE BELIEVABLE, SIR.

I HAVE TO EXPLAIN EVERY THING TO HER

AS LONG

GISHI

GISHI (CREAK)

...I THINK SATOKO WILL AT LEAST HEAR ME OUT WITHOUT LAUGHING IN MY FACE.

BUT...

...WILL SHE BELIEVE THAT THE MANGA STORY WE TALKED ABOUT AT SCHOOL...

...IS REAL AND THAT WE'RE IN GRAVE DANGER AT THIS VERY MOMENT?

WILL SHE BELIEVE SOMETHING SO UNREAL-ISTIC?

GARA (SLIDE)

SOMETHING THAT ANYONE WOULD— UNDER-STANDABLY— THINK IS A JOKE...?

...?

SATOKO ...?

YOUR THINGS ARE ALL PACKED AND READY TO GO, RIKA.

PON (PAT)

ポーン ポン

PON

WE'RE GOING TO STAY AT MION-SAN'S HOUSE, AREN'T WE?

SATOKO... WHAT ARE YOU DOING ...?

WELCOME BACK, RIKA.

I'M HURT, RIKA!

WHY DIDN'T YOU TALK TO ME ABOUT THIS?

WHA...? HOW...?

SHE HEARD... EVERY-THING? THE WHOLE CONVER-SATION WE HAD OUT BACK?

!

I SAW YOU OUT-SIDE ON THE GROUNDS WITH A CROWD OF ADULTS. I WONDERED WHAT WAS GOING ON!

HON-ESTLY, YOU ARE SO RUDE!

WHO DO YOU THINK I AM?

YOU BELIEVED ALL THAT CRAZY TALK?

SATO-KO...

I'M YOUR NUMBER ONE VERY BEST FRIEND!

HOW COULD YOU POSSIBLY THINK I WOULDN'T BELIEVE ANYTHING YOU TOLD ME!

I'M GLAD TO SEE RIKA-CHAN HAS SUCH A WONDERFUL FRIEND.

YES, I'M AKASAKA.

ペコリ

PEKORI (BOW)

YOU'RE AKASAKA-SAN?

PLEASE TAKE GOOD CARE OF RIKA!

THE TRAPS ARDUND THE HOUSE ARE

SATOKO BELIEVED ME...

.....

YEAH...

OF COURSE SHE BELIEVES YOU.

SATOKO IS YOUR BEST FRIEND, RIKA, SIR.

Su (SSK)

ス...

THE NIGHT OF JUNE 16TH WEARS ON.

AND WE GAIN MORE AND MORE DEPENDABLE ALLIES FOR THE FIGHT THAT WILL BE OUR FINAL CHALLENGE.

THIS TIME I WON'T LET HER KILL HIM.

AND THIS TIME I TOO WILL SURVIVE.

THE FINAL KEY, TOMITAKE, WILL BE MURDERED IN THREE DAYS.

DESTINY WILL MOVE IN THE NEXT THREE DAYS...!

CHAPTER 23: OPERATION FORTY-EIGHT HOURS

WHAAAT!?

JUNE 17, THE SONOZAKI ESTATE

THAT MANGA YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT...

...IS TRUE? AND IT'S HAPPENING RIGHT NOW!?

YES, SIR...

MEW...

I WAS SURPRISED TOO. THEY SUDDENLY SHOWED UP LAST NIGHT ASKING ME TO HIDE THEM.

MEW ...

SO THIS TOKYO ORGANIZATION REALLY IS TRYING TO KILL YOU...

...AND THEY'RE GOING TO DO IT ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING?

I'M VERY SORRY FOR GETTING YOU ALL MIXED UP IN THIS, SIRS...

SHIN (SILENCE)

RIKA...

NORMALLY KIDS LIKE US WOULD NEVER STAND A CHANCE AGAINST A GROUP LIKE THIS, SIRS.

THE PLOT I'M INVOLVED IN IS SO BIG THAT EVEN POLICEMEN ARE SCARED TO FACE IT.

...YOU HAVE IT ALL WRONG, RIKA, SIR!

NO ONE THINKS YOU'RE IMPOSING OR ANY-THING OF THE SORT, SIR!

AND THE MEMBERS OF OUR CLUB WOULD NEVER BE AFRAID OF THE LIKES OF "TOKYO"!

ガラ

RIGHT. EXACTLY RIGHT...

YOU REALLY GET IT, HANYU!

ガラ

RIGHT, KEIICHI, SIR!?

H-HANYU ...

パチーン
PACHIN (SNAP)

SURE, I WAS IN SHOCK FOR A SECOND— THIS THING IS HUGE!

BUT COME ON, GUYS! I KNOW YOU'RE ALL THINKING, "NOW THIS IS GETTING INTEREST-ING!"

LIKE WE FINALLY FOUND SOMEBODY WE CAN GO ALL OUT AGAINST!

YOU'VE GOTTA HAVE SOMETHING YOU'VE BEEN SAVING!

A SECRET TRAP— ONE THEY WON'T WALK AWAY FROM LAUGHING!

ビシ
BISHI (POINT)

SA-TOKO!

THIS IS YOUR TIME TO SHINE!

YOU KNOW ME ALL TOO WELL.

...OH-HO-HO...

HEH HEH, THAT'S THE SPIRIT.

AND YOU, RENA.

I HESITATED TO USE THEM, EVEN ON CLUB MEMBERS, BUT IF IT'S TIME TO PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS ...

...YOU'LL SEE JUST HOW MANY MIRACU-LOUS TRAPS I HAVE IN STORE!

WHEN THE TIME COMES TO FIGHT, YOU'LL BE THE STRONGEST ONE HERE— YOU DON'T BACK DOWN FOR ANY-BODY!

I DON'T THINK EVEN I COULD BEAT YOU!

YOU'RE PRETTY INCREDIBLE TOO, KEICHI-KUN. WHEN YOU NEED TO, YOU CAN SPRING INTO ACTION WITH A HUGE BURST OF POWER.

I THINK YOU COULD TEAR DOWN DESTINY'S PLANS IN A WAY THAT I NEVER COULD.

BISHI POINT

SATO-KO...

GU (GRAB)

GOOD POINT.

KEIICHI, RENA...

AND THE LADY WHO BURNS WHITE-HOT, RENA RYUGU!

THIS WILL BE OUR GREATEST CHANCE TO SHOW THE WORLD WHAT OUR CLUB IS MADE OF!!

THE MAN WHO BURNS RED-HOT! KEIICHI MAE-BARA!!

...BUT HERE'S WHAT THIS OLD MAN WAS THINKING ...

I DIDN'T WANT TO SPEAK OUT OF TURN...

HEH HEH HEH...

RIGHT, MION!!

AND! THE STRON-GEST CLUB IN THE WORLD IS LED BY ITS MOST POWER-FUL LEADER!!

YOU SHOW PROMISE, NEWBIE!

HANYU!

MION... EVERY-ONE...

...YOU KNEW JUST WHO TO LIGHT THE SPARK UNDER FIRST!

IN THIS CLUB OF HOOD-LUMS...

わし

WASHI (RUFF-E)

I KNOW YOU VERY WELL, KEIICHI, SIR!

WASH!

わし

...THANK YOU...FOR BELIEVING ME.

EVERY-ONE...

YEA

YEAH!!

GUYS! WE'LL MAKE THEM PAY THROUGH THE NOSE FOR THAT!!

THEY'VE DECIDED THEY'RE TOP IN HINAMIZAWA WITHOUT EVEN GIVING A NOD TO OUR CLUB!!

THIS IS GOING TO BE THE MOST FUN I'VE EVER HAD!!

AHA

AHA

RIKA, WE'RE GOING TO DO IT, SIR.

WE WILL FIND A WAY TO BEAT TAKANO.

WE'RE YOUR FRIENDS. OF COURSE WE BELIEVE YOU.

KOKU (NOD)

コク…

NOW THAT'S SETTLED, IT'S TIME TO STRAT-EGIZE!

WE'LL BUST THEIR TWISTED CONSPIR-ACY INTO LITTLE PIECES!

SO LET'S GO OVER THIS AGAIN.

AKASAKA IS VERY STRONG, SIR!

I FEEL MUCH MORE SECURE WITH AKA-SAKA ON OUR SIDE, SIR.

THAT "AKA-SAKA" GUY'LL BE STAYING AT YOUR HOUSE WHILE YOU'RE GONE, SO NO ONE WILL KNOW YOU'RE NOT THERE

WE OWE HIM ONE!

RIKA-CHAN AND SATOKO WILL SAY THEY'RE SICK AND STAY OUT OF SCHOOL

...IS TOMITAKE-SAN WITH THE VITAL TASK OF CATCHING THE ENEMY BY THE TAIL.

MORE IMPOR-TANT...

BUT AKASAKA'S MAIN ROLE WILL BE TO PROTECT YOU IN CASE OF AN EMER-GENCY.

WHEN THAT HAPPENS, VICTORY IS OURS.

HE'S OUR OFFENSIVE PLAYER.

IF HE CAN GET PROOF OF TAKANO-SAN'S PLOT, THEN HE CAN SEND FOR A WATCHDOG TEAM TO SUPPRESS OUR TOKYO ENEMIES.

IS THERE ANYTHING WE CAN DO OFFENSE-WISE?

SO IT ALL DEPENDS ON TOMITAKE-SAN'S INVESTIGATION...

...AND PUT A STOP TO THEIR WHOLE CONSPIRACY

SOMETHING THAT'D HELP WITH TOMITAKE-SAN'S INVESTIGATION...

...THAT WOULD LAND A DIRECT HIT ON THE ENEMY...

I THINK WE CAN USE THAT AS OUR TRUMP CARD.

YOU'RE WITH US, RIKA-CHAN, AND YOU'RE THE KEY TO THEIR WHOLE PLAN.

I'M SURE WE CAN.

CAN WE REALLY DO ANYTHING?

THEIR GOAL IS TO KILL YOU AND INITIATE THAT EMERGENCY MANUAL.

THEY'LL WIPE OUT THE ENTIRE VILLAGE AND USE THAT AS LEVERAGE IN THE FACTIONAL DISPUTES WITHIN THEIR ORGANIZATION.

は？

HA (GASP)

DOES THIS GROUP HAVE SOME KIND OF A WEAK POINT...?

HEH HEH HEH HEH...

WHAT'S UP, MION?

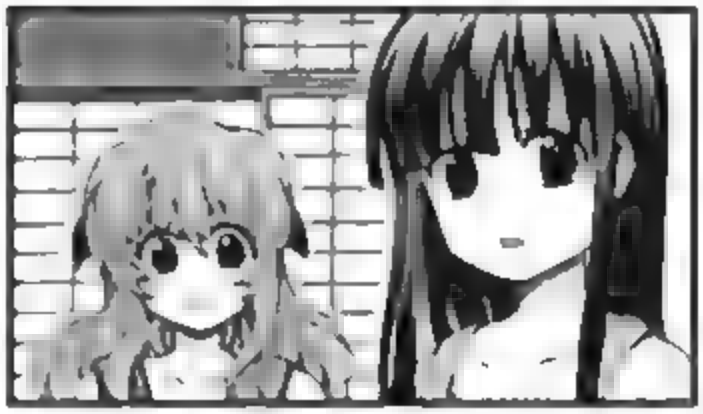
...YES... THAT'S RIGHT, SIR...

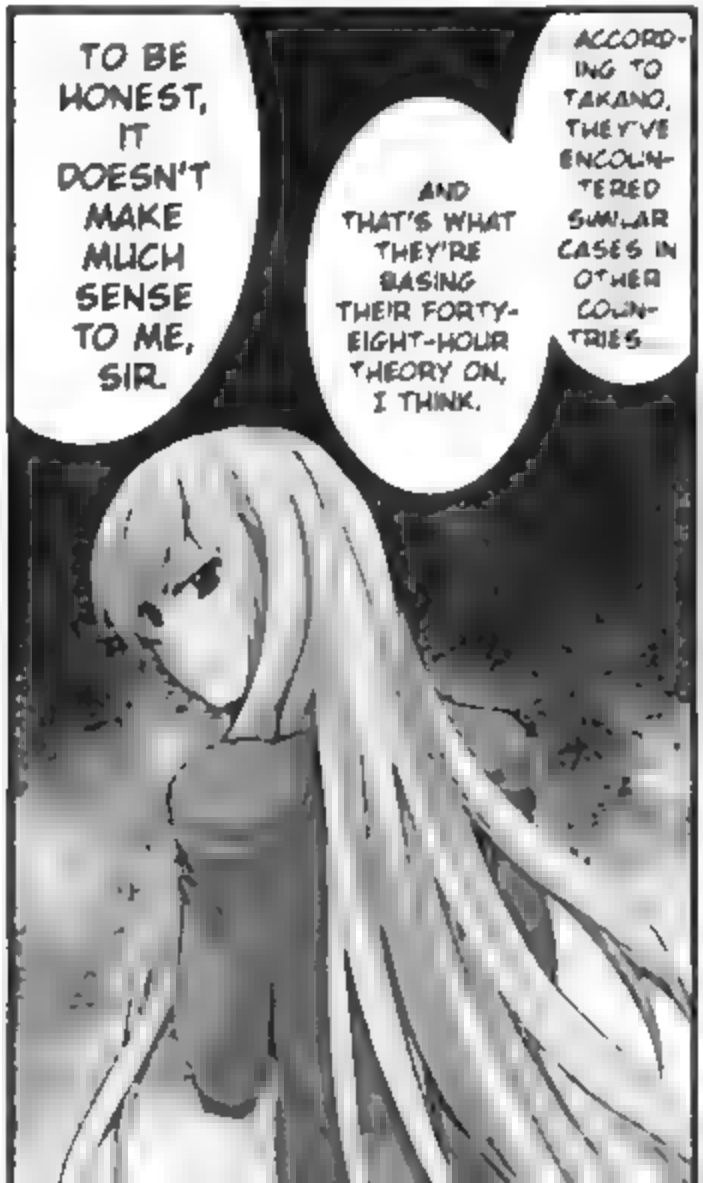
WELL.

SO THEY ACTIVATE THE MANUAL TO STOP THE OUT-BREAK BEFORE THEN, RIGHT?

THIS EMERGENCY MANUAL THING...IF YOU DIE, EVERYONE IN THE VILLAGE WILL GO MAD WITHIN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS.

RIKA-CHAN, LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT.




TO BE HONEST, IT DOESN'T MAKE MUCH SENSE TO ME, SIR.
AND THAT'S WHAT THEY'RE BASING THEIR FORTY-EIGHT-HOUR THEORY ON, I THINK.
ACCORDING TO TAKANO, THEY'VE ENCOUNTERED SIMILAR CASES IN OTHER COUNTRIES

...SO HOW DO THEY KNOW THAT THE VILLAGERS WILL GO MAD WITHIN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS?
YOU'VE NEVER DIED BEFORE...

IRIE SAID THEY DON'T REALLY KNOW FOR SURE EITHER, SIR.

NIYARI (SMIRK)

IN OTHER WORDS, SAYING THAT THE WHOLE VILLAGE WILL GO MAD...

...IS ONLY AN EDUCATED GUESS.

NI (GRIND)

WH-WHAT DID YOU GET, SIRS?

RENA DOESN'T GET IT EITHER.

I GOT IT TOO!

GATAN (CLATTER)

I GET IT! I KNOW THEIR WEAK-NESS!

...THE ENEMY'S OFFENSIVE STRATEGY DEPENDS ENTIRELY ON THAT EMERGENCY MANUAL.

34

LISTEN. JUST LIKE WE HAVE TO DEPEND ON TOMITAKE-SAN FOR OUR OFFENSE...

SO ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS TEAR APART THE WHOLE REASON FOR THAT MANUAL.

MAKE IT SO THERE'S NO JUSTIFICATION FOR IT.

THEY MADE THE MANUAL TO PREVENT THAT.

...ALL TWO THOUSAND VILLAGERS WILL GO CRAZY WITHIN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS.

THE MANUAL IS BASED WHOLLY ON ONE ASSUMPTION: IF THE QUEEN CARRIER—THAT'S YOU—DIES...

SO THERE'S NO JUSTIFICATION FOR THE EMERGENCY MANUAL...?

SO...
YOU WANT TO MAKE IT FALL APART...

BUT HOW?

SO IF THAT THEORY FALLS APART, THEN THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO ACTIVATE THE MANUAL.

BUT IT'S ONLY A THEORY THAT THE OUTBREAK WILL HAPPEN WITHIN TWO DAYS.

BASI-
CALLY...

WELL...

WE'LL NEED HELP FROM OUR POLICE OFFICER FRIEND OOISHI FOR THIS ONE.

WE'LL HAVE THE POLICE RELEASE A REPORT...

WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

WHAT ..?

...YOU JUST HAVE TO BE DEAD FOR FORTY-EIGHT HOURS!!

AND WE MAKE SURE TAKANO GETS THE FALSE INFORMATION.

BUT THAT SHE'S BEEN DEAD FOR MORE THAN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS.

...THAT THEY'VE FOUND RIKA-CHAN'S BODY.

THEY'LL THINK MAYBE THIS FORTY-EIGHT-HOUR MASS-OUTBREAK THING WAS WRONG.

AND THEN THEY'LL START TO DOUBT THE PURPOSE OF THE EMERGENCY MANUAL.

THEN IT WILL LOOK LIKE HINAMIZAWA IS STILL A PEACEFUL VILLAGE, DESPITE IT HAVING BEEN MORE THAN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS SINCE YOUR DEATH.

94

HU-HAT.

HE'LL CALL IN THE WATCHDOGS, AND TAKANO'S FACTION WILL BE CRUSHED.

THEN THEIR CONSPIR-ACY WILL HAVE FAILED.

AND WHILE THEY'RE STILL SHAKEN UP, TOMITAKE-SAN CAN SWOOP IN AND HAVE THE WHOLE GROUP RIGHT WHERE WE WANT THEM!

THE BIG WIGS'LL PUT A STOP TO THE MANUAL FOR SURE!

NO ONE WILL WANT TO SANCTION A PLAN THAT WILL WIPE OUT A WHOLE VILLAGE.

THEN IT'LL BE ALL OVER FOR THEM!

IN OTHER WORDS ...

EARLY IN THE MORNING THE DAY AFTER TOMOR-ROW...

...WILL BE EARLY IN THE MORNING THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW. WE'LL SAY THAT'S WHEN THEY FOUND THE BODY. IT'LL BE PERFECT.

FORTY-EIGHT HOURS FROM THEN...

THE LAST TIME ANYONE SAW YOU IN PUBLIC WAS AT SCHOOL YESTER-DAY.

ON THE MORNING OF THE COTTON DRIFTING, WE'LL HAVE OOISHI-SAN LEAK THE FALSE INFORMATION.

...THE MORNING OF THE COTTON DRIFTING.

I NEVER THOUGHT OF THAT...

I SEE... THAT COULD WORK...

GU (CLENCH)

"Π"

OHHH!

THIS WILL BE A DELIGHTFUL TRAP INDEED!

HO! HO!!

ALL RIGHT! I CAN SEE IT NOW! I SEE JUST HOW WE'RE GONNA WIN THIS!!

ONWARD TO VICTORY!!

WE'LL CALL IT OPERATION FORTY-EIGHT HOURS!

YEAAAAH!

HOW DO THEY COME UP WITH THESE THINGS...?

MY FRIENDS...

...IT MIGHT WORK.

BUT...

GU (CLENCH)

IF WE DO THIS...

GATAN (CLATTER)

...IF WE ALL WORK TOGETH-ER...

...THEN THIS TIME, WE CAN BEAT DESTINY!

NO...

WE WILL BEAT DESTINY!

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT THERE, SIR.

NIKO (SMILE)

NOW WE JUST NEED TO KNOW IF OOISHI-SAN WILL HELP US OR NOT.

HEE...

THE NEXT DAY

JUNE 18, MORNING

MIIIN (BUZZ)

MIN MIN MIN

ONE DAY BEFORE THE COTTON DRIFTING

THANKS FOR SHOPPING WITH US.

THANK YOU...

OPERATION FORTY-EIGHT HOURS...

...AND THEY HAD A CRAZY FAVOR TO ASK ME.

I WENT TO THE SONOZAKI ESTATE YESTERDAY TO CHECK ON RIKA-CHAN...

WILL YOU HELP US, OOISHI-SAN?

AND THAT'S THE PLAN WE CAME UP WITH.

...THEN THERE WILL BE MORE THAN MY PENSION AT STAKE.

BUT IF I SPREAD FALSE INFORMATION ABOUT A DEAD GIRL, AND IT GETS OUT THAT IT WAS ME...

IT IS A GOOD PLAN...

MIIN (BUZZ)

MIN MIN MIN

I GUESS THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO SUCK IT UP AND GET TO WORK...

ZA (SKSH)

.....

GRAVE: FAMILY GRAVE

...OYASSAN.

PASA (SLIP)

SU (SSK)

TOMORROW IS THE COTTON DRIFTING. THE ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR DEATH.

EVERY SINGLE YEAR, I SWEAR TO YOU THAT THIS WILL BE THE YEAR I FIND YOUR RIGHT ARM.

BUT I HAVE NOTHING TO SHOW FOR IT.

THEY TELL ME THE SONO-ZAKIS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.

...IT'D MAKE YOU LAUGH TO HEAR IT.

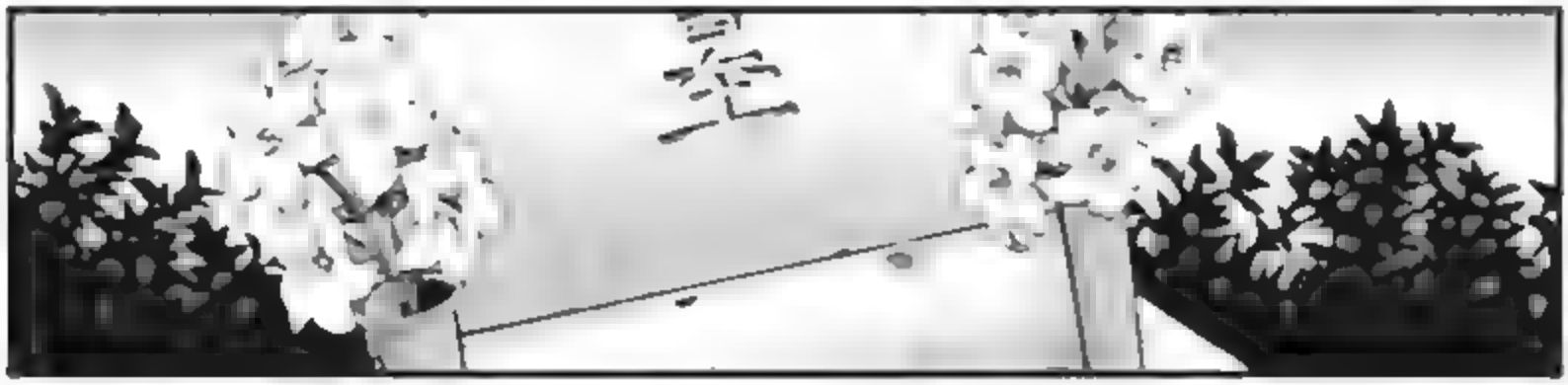
NOW I'VE FINALLY GOTTEN CLOSE TO LEARNING THE TRUTH BEHIND YOUR DEATH.

I'VE SWORN TO YOU EVERY YEAR THAT I WOULD DRAG THAT ORYOU WOMAN DOWN HERE AND MAKE HER GROVEL BEFORE YOU

BUT THEY TELL ME I WAS COMPLETELY OFF THE MARK.

I KNOW YOU'D SLUG ME AGAIN FOR THAT.

YOU'D CALL ME A DAMN FOOL...



ALL I'LL GET IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH.

AT BEST, IT'LL CORRECT ALL OF MY IDIOTIC ASSUMPTIONS.

AND THERE'S NOT MUCH PAYOUT FOR THE RISK

OYASSAN I'M ABOUT TO CROSS A DANGEROUS BRIDGE

BUT...

...I'M FINALLY STARTING TO FEEL LIKE I CAN FORGIVE MYSELF.

ZA (SKSH)

MIIN (BUZZZ)

MIN MIN MIN MIN

ZA

ZA

ZA

...THERE ARE ALWAYS BLUE HYDRANGEAS DECORATING THE GRAVE.

EVERY YEAR WHEN I COME TO VISIT...

FOOT-STEPS ...?

IS IT THE PERSON WHO LEAVES THOSE BLUE HYDRAN-GEAS?

WHO IN THE WORLD WOULD ...?

I WONDER IF IT'S SOME-ONE OYASSAN KNEW...

EVERY YEAR WITHOUT EXCEP-TION.

MEMBERS OF THE SONOZAKI FAMILY?

WHAT ARE THEY DOING HERE...?

OOISHI-OJI-SAMA, I'M GOING TO ARRANGE THE FLOWERS. PARDON ME.

TCH.

SU (SHFF)

MY, MY. AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE ON DUTY?

YOU NAUGHTY MAN.

BEAUTIFUL, AREN'T THEY?

THEY'RE FROM OUR GARDEN.

BLUE HYDRANGEAS...

DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE THE ONES...

...WHO'VE BEEN LEAVING THESE HYDRANGEAS FOR OYASSAN EVERY YEAR?

AKANE SONOZAKI...

SHION SONOZAKI...

WHY WOULD THE SONO-ZAKIS VISIT OYASSAN'S GRAVE...?

.....

SO I MADE SURE TO GET FLOWERS THAT WENT WITH THEM.

...THE HYDRAN-GEAS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HERE ALREADY WHEN I VISITED.

BLUE AND WHITE. WHAT A LOVELY COLOR COMBINA-TION.

YOUR WHITE BELLFLOW-ERS AND OUR BLUE HYDRAN-GEAS.

...BRING FLOWERS TO THE GRAVE OF THE PROJECT DIRECTOR...?

WHY WOULD TWO MEMBERS OF THE SONOZAKI FAMILY, WHO WERE SO OPPOSED TO THE DAM PROJECT ...

BUT WOULD YOU BE SO KIND AS TO TELL ME ONE THING?

...THE DAM PROJECT IS OVER.

WELL...

2A (SNIFF)

HA-HA... I JUST DON'T GET IT.

THE ONIGAFUCH DEFENSE ALLIANCE—LED BY THE SONOZAKIS—AND THE DAM CONSTRUCTION SUPPORTERS WERE SO VIOLENTLY IN CONFLICT. .

I HAVE A HARDER TIME UNDERSTANDING YOU.

THE WAR IS OVER.

THEY CALL THE END OF A RUGBY GAME "NO SIDE," DON'T THEY? MEANING THE TWO SIDES' STRUGGLE AGAINST ONE ANOTHER IS OVER?

IT'S LIKE THAT.

IN MY MIND, THE DAM WAR IS OVER.

BUT IS IT STILL GOING ON IN YOUR VIEW?

IF I NEVER HAVE TO GO THROUGH THOSE RIOTS AGAIN, IT WILL BE TOO SOON.

IT'S OVER.

OF COURSE NOT.

SU (SHP)

THEN THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH SONOZAKIS VISITING A GRAVE, IS THERE?

HEH...

THAT WRAPPING... YOU LEAVE A PACKAGE LIKE THAT EVERY YEAR. WHAT'S INSIDE IT?

ONI-BABA'S SPECIAL OHAGI.

THAT'S IMPOS-SIBLE...

BUT SHE SAYS THAT MEN WHO DRINK PROB-ABLY DON'T LIKE SWEETS, SO SHE DOESN'T USE AS MUCH SUGAR.

EH...?

YOU JUST SAID THAT YOU'VE SEEN THEM EVERY YEAR, DIDN'T YOU?

SHE MAKES THEM AND OFFERS THEM TO THE DE-CEASED.

...FOR THE ANNIVER-SARY OF THE DAM DIRECTOR'S DEATH— EVERY YEAR?

YOU'RE SAYING THE OLD LADY ORYOU MAKES OHAGI...

.....

...THESE ARE THE TIMES WE LIVE IN.

IF THINGS DON'T GO WELL, THE ERA NAME MAY CHANGE WITHIN A FEW YEARS.

IT'S NEARLY THE SIXTIETH YEAR OF THE SHOWA ERA.

THOSE LEFT BEHIND ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CLEANING UP THE OLD ERA AND BUILDING UP THE NEW.

SO WE REPENT.

THE GOVERNMENT WAS AT FAULT, AND SO WERE WE.

AND THEN IT'S DONE.

ALL THIS BUSINESS ABOUT HOW SONOZAKIS...

...SHOULDN'T BE LEAVING FLOWERS IN FRONT OF THE DAM DIRECTOR'S GRAVE.

最後の墓

SHION, GO GIVE THIS ENVELOPE TO THE CHIEF PRIEST.

BUT...

...SHE'S BEEN MAKING OHAGI FOR HIM...

BUT EVERY YEAR ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF HIS DEATH...

ALL THIS TIME I WAS SURE SHE WAS THE MASTERMIND BEHIND OYASSAN'S MURDER.

OLD LADY ORYOU IS FIRST ON THE LIST OF DIEHARD ONIGAFUCHI DEFENDERS.

...DON'T YOU THINK IT'S HIGH TIME WE PUT AN END TO ALL THIS?

MASTER OOISHI...

...YOU ARE ALIVE.

THERE WAS AN UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT, AND THIS MAN LOST HIS LIFE.

...IF HE WERE ALIVE TODAY, I WOULD LIKE TO GO OUT FOR DRINKS WITH HIM AND LET BYGONES BE BYGONES.

BUT UNFORTUNATELY, HE IS DEAD.

SO I CAN NEVER MAKE AMENDS WITH THIS MAN.

...I FIND THAT VERY SAD.

AND YOU ALL ARE ALIVE TOO.

THAT'S RIGHT. I AM ALIVE.

.....

...THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMEBODY DIES...

AH, THE CLOUDS ARE BREAKING.

SO MAYBE ONE DAY YOU AND I WILL BE FRIENDS.

BUT...

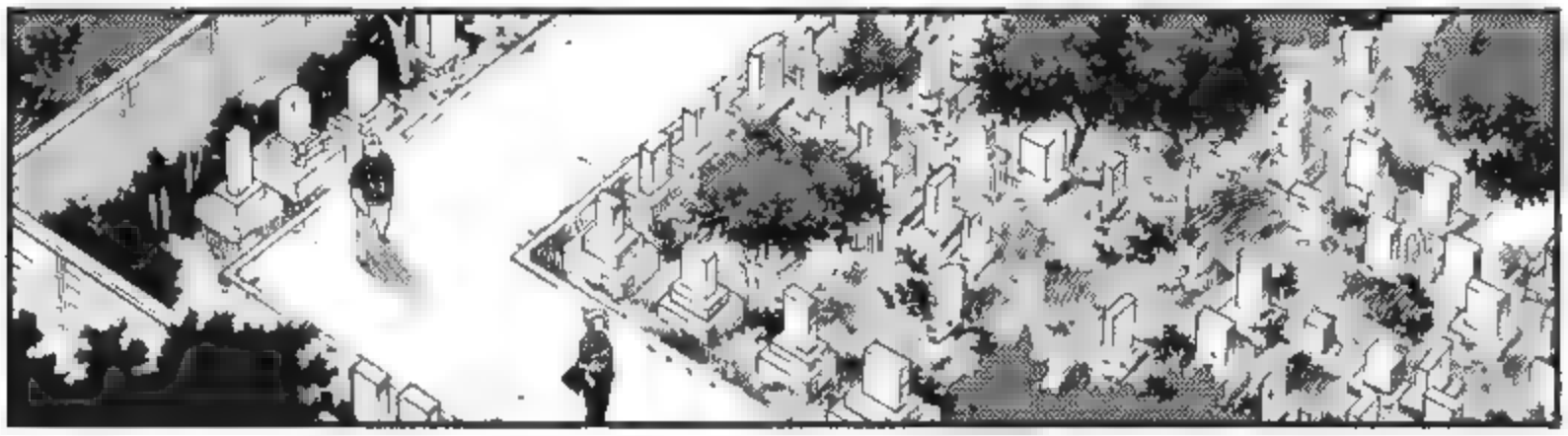
IN JEAR
YOU STILL
REMEMBER
THAT NAME?

I WISH
YOU
WOULD
FORGET
IT

FROM
THE ARCANE
SUNDEAR
DEMON
PRINCESS
OF
SHISHIBONE?

INDEED
FOR
EXAMPLE
WHEN I
START
GETTING
LECTURES

THE DAM WAR IS OVER AFTER ALL.



WHO WOULD'VE THOUGHT THE DAY WOULD COME WHEN I'D HAVE THAT DISCUSSION WITH AKANE SONOZAKI HERSELF...
BUT... I DON'T FEEL SO BAD ABOUT IT.

MIIN (BUZZZ)

MIN

MIN

MIN

THE DAM WAR IS OVER...

...AND THE TIMES CHANGE...

TAKE OPERATION FORTY-EIGHT HOURS, FOR EXAMPLE...

SHE'S RIGHT...

TIMES CHANGE.

AN OLD MAN LIKE ME WOULD NEVER HAVE COME UP WITH SUCH A DARING PLAN.

THE NEXT ERA...

...WILL BE THEIRS...

I'D BETTER GET GOING MYSELF.

OYAS-SAN

HEH...

AND...

I NEED TO SETTLE ACCOUNTS WITH THE PAST.

...I NEED TO ENSURE A FUTURE FOR THOSE YOUNG FOLK.

IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S TIME FOR ME TO STICK MY NECK OUT.

...WELL...

...WISH ME LUCK.

CHAPTER 24: EVE OF THE FINAL BATTLE

JUNE 18,
IRIE CLINIC

ONE DAY BEFORE THE COTTON DRIFTING

HELLO, NOMURA-SAN...?

THE PREPARATIONS ARE MOVING ALONG NICELY.

OH? THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR. HEH-HEH-HEH-HEH-HEH.

THEN THE CURTAIN GOES UP TOMORROW NIGHT.

You will administer H173 to First Lieutenant Tomitake...

...and he will meet with his tragic accident.

.....

...and that will all eventually lead to the activation of *Emergency Manual 34*.

34

The board at Tokyo will turn a suspicious eye on the Irie Institute...

?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

YOU CAN LEAVE IT ALL TO US.

EVERY-THING IS IN PLACE FOR THAT AS WELL.

...WHAT IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG?

... UM ...

WHAT IF FIRST LIEUTENANT TOMITAKE ACCEPTS THE BRIBE?

I think that if we win him to our side, he could be very useful to us.

He's the auditor for the board.

BRIBING THE FIRST LIEUTENANT WAS NOT PART OF THE PLAN.

.....

...RIGHT...

It would be best to stick with the plan and make sure he dies.

Even if he were to join our side, the risk outweighs the benefit.

カチャ…
KACHA (CLICK)

JIROU-SAN...

ガチャン…
GACHAN (CLACK)

RRR...

TELL HIM IT'S TAKANO.

YES...I WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK WITH TOMITAKE IN ROOM 406.

HELLO!

YOU HAVE REACHED THE ECONO-MY HOTEL IN OKINO-MIYA.

.....

One moment please.

The guest in room 406 is currently out.

I'm terribly sorry, ma'am.

I LEFT A MESSAGE ASKING HIM TO CALL ME BACK, BUT HE'S NOT RESPOND-ING.

THIS IS THE THIRD TIME I'VE TRIED CALLING HIM.

GACHAN (CLICK)

WHAT'S GOING ON, JIROU-SAN...?

MIIN (BUZZ)

MIIN

MIIN

MIIN

ZA (SKFF)

JIROU-SAN...

ZA

IT'S WEIRD ...

I USED TO THINK HE WAS SO ANNOYING, FOLLOWING ME AROUND EVERY-WHERE.

BUT NOW THAT WE'RE ABOUT TO PUT THE PLAN INTO EFFECT...

...WHY DO I WANT TO SEE HIM SO BADLY?

I WAS JUST TALKING ABOUT KILLING HIM...

HE'S ALL I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT FOR THE LAST FEW DAYS...

...AND I REALIZED SOME-THING.

ZA

ZA

MIIIN

MIN

MIN

MIN

HE HAS NO SENSE OF HUMOR AND NO SENSE OF FASHION.

HE DOESN'T HAVE AN OUNCE OF MASCULINE CHARM.

HE HAS NOTHING. NOTHING. ABSOLUTELY NOTHING.

WELL, HE HAS ONE THING— THAT BULGE IN HIS STOMACH.

BUT NOTHING GOOD.

...THE NEXT THING I KNOW, I'M DOING EVERYTHING HIS WAY.

STILL...

...WHEN HE DRAGS ME AROUND WITH A CAMERA IN ONE HAND...

AND NO MATTER WHAT KIND OF A BAD MOOD I WAS IN BEFORE...

...I FIND MYSELF SMILING.

...I WANT HIM TO FORGIVE ME.

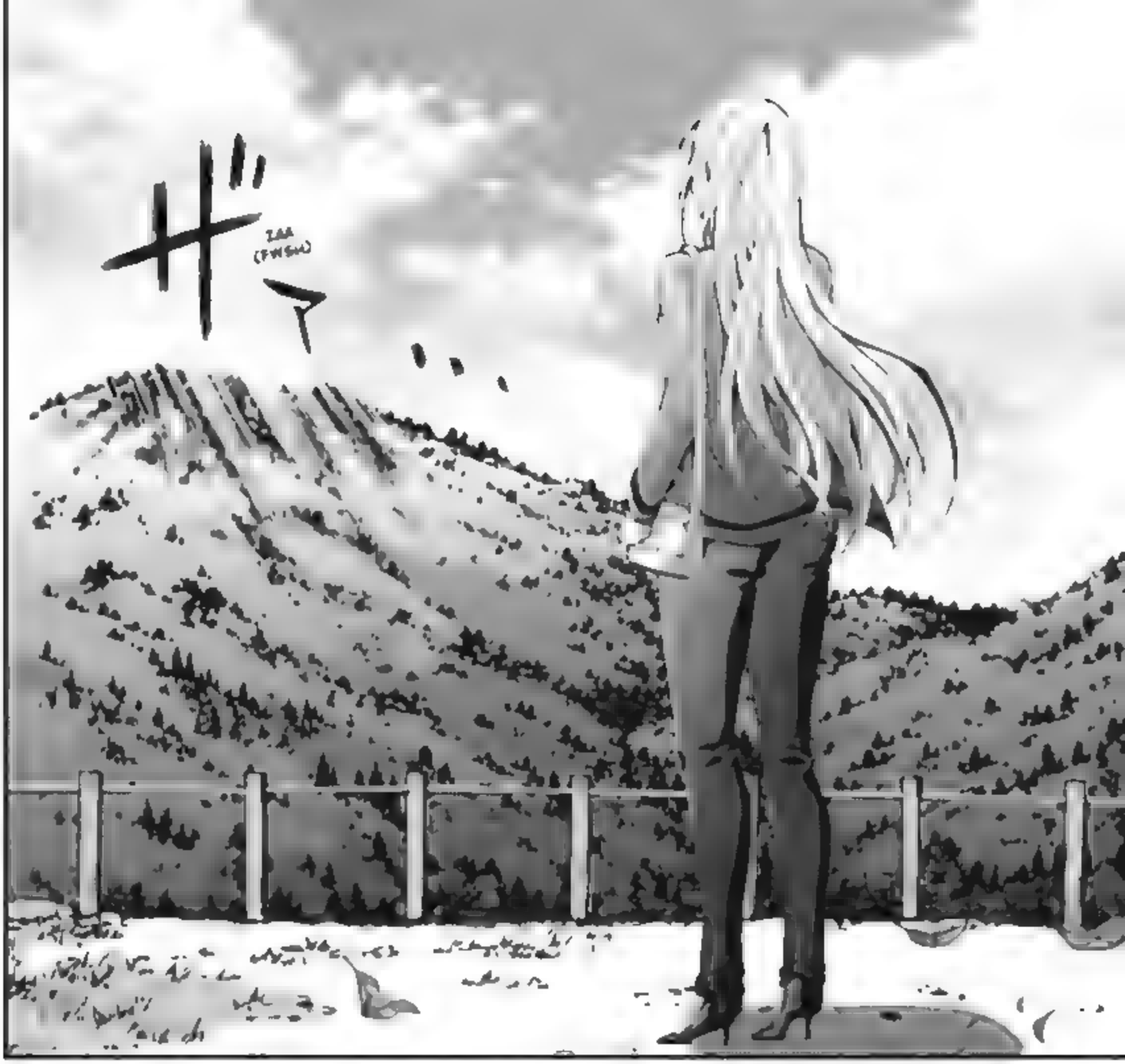
SOME-WHERE IN MY HEART... I WANT HIM TO FORGIVE ME.

AND...

ZA (SKSH)

I WANT HIM TO DRAG ME AROUND AGAIN.

I WANT HIM TO GIVE ME ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE ENTHUSIASTIC LECTURES ON PHOTOGRAPHY THAT I NEVER ASKED FOR.


ZAA
(FWSH)

I THOUGHT... MAYBE... HE WOULD BE WAITING FOR ME HERE.
JIROU-SAN AND I WOULD MEET HERE ALL THE TIME.

BEHIND THE SHRINE...
PROB-ABLY THE PLACE WITH THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SCENERY IN THE VILLAGE.

JIROU-SAN ISN'T HERE...

ZAAAAA

BUT OF COURSE HE'S NOT.

THAT WOULD BE MUCH TOO CONVE-NIENT.

I'M ABOUT TO CREATE A TERRIBLE TRAGEDY THAT CAN'T BE UNDONE.

THAT'S WHY I SO DESPER-ATELY WANT TO FIND HIM...

I CAN'T POSSIBLY EXPECT HIM TO FORGIVE ME.

...I WANT SOME-ONE TO FORGIVE SOME-THING...

AND NOW THAT THERE'S NO TURNING BACK...

BUT I HAVE NO CHOICE.

NO ONE WILL FORGIVE ME NOW.

THIS IS ALL TO MAKE GRANDPA INTO A GOD.

GU (CLENCH)

...HE WOULD CARRY OUT HIS PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND ARREST ME.

IF HE KNEW WHAT I'M ABOUT TO DO...

GRANDPA'S RESEARCH WILL BE ETERNALLY ETCHED INTO THIS WORLD BY MY HAND.

THAT WAS GRANDPA'S WISH...!

ZAAAAA (FWSHHH)

DOO

WOULD HAVING HIS RESEARCH ACKNOWLEDGED LIKE THIS...

...REALLY MAKE GRANDPA HAPPY?

HA (GASP)

THAT WILL BE PROOF THAT THEY ACKNOWLEDGED HIS WORK.

...WILL DECIDE TO WIPE OUT HINAMIZAWA.

ONCE THE TRAGEDY IS EXECUTED, THEN BASED ON GRANDPA'S RESEARCH, THE GOVERNMENT...

GRANDPA'S RESEARCH WILL BE DELETED FOR ALL ETERNITY.

BUT WHEN THAT HAPPENS, EVERYTHING ABOUT HINAMIZAWA SYNDROME, INCLUDING ITS VERY EXISTENCE, WILL BE ERASED FROM HISTORY.

WAS IT REALLY?

AND MAYBE THEY WOULD HAVE BROUGHT IT BACK INTO THE LIGHT OF DAY.

IF IT JULY HAD CONTINUED TO EXIST THEN SOMEDAY SOMEONE WOULD HAVE REALIZED THE GREATNESS OF THIS WORK.

...THEN GRANDPA'S RESEARCH MAY HAVE FOREVER LIVED IN SHADOW.

BUT IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN OBLITERATED.

IF I HADN'T DECIDED TO DO THIS...

...I DESTROYED THAT POSSIBILITY.

BUT I...

WAS I WRONG?

ごくり...

SHOULD I NEVER HAVE TRIED TO CARRY ON HIS LEGACY!?

BUT WHAT IF I WAS?

THAT'S IMPOS-SIBLE, YOU CAN'T HAVE BEEN WRONG...!

CALM DOWN, MIYO!!!

GIR (SQUEEZE)

...WOULD THIS NEVER HAVE HAPPENED!?

IF I HADN'T STARTED HELPING GRANDPA WITH HIS WORK...

THAT'S RIGHT.

THEN GRANDPA'S RESEARCH WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ERADI-CATED.

...I SHOULD NEVER HAVE ASKED GRANDPA FOR HELP.

NO, EVEN BEFORE THAT...

ガン

I SHOULD HAVE STAYED THERE WITHOUT ASKING GRANDPA TO COME HELP ME.

THEN I WOULDN'T HAVE CAUSED ANY TROUBLE TO GRANDPA OR ANYONE ELSE.

ガン

I SHOULD HAVE STAYED AT THAT ORPHANAGE.

ガン

I SHOULD HAVE DROWNED IN THAT SEA OF WASTE.

...DIRTY...

SMELLY...

...AND WRETCHED!!

HAVE I ALWAYS BEEN SO WEAK-MINDED?

WHY AM I SO WORKED UP!?

WHAT IS WRONG WITH ME!!?

NO, IT CAN'T BE TRUE...

HOW COULD I EVER THINK THAT I'VE BEEN WASTING MY TIME?

ガシ

I...I...

WHY AREN'T YOU HERE!?

PLEASE, JIROU-SAN! BE HERE WITH ME!!

"TAKANO-SAN."

JIROU-SA—

HA (GASP)

は…

AH...

MIN (BUZZ)

ミーンミンミンミン…

MIN

MIN

MIN

Y-YES.

ARE YOU ON YOUR WAY TO SEE RIKA-CHAN?

...I'M SORRY, I DON'T KNOW.

BY THE WAY, DR. IRIE...

..UM, YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO KNOW WHERE JIROU-SAN IS, WOULD YOU?

IT WAS JUST A LITTLE DIZZY SPELL... I'M FINE NOW.

WHAT'S THE MATTER? ARE YOU FEELING ALL RIGHT?

ワイ
WAI

ワイ
WAI
(CHATTER)

OH...

YES ...?

DR. IRIE...?

I DID.

?

NO, I...

...WE WOULD ALWAYS GO TO THE RESTAURANT ON THE TOP FLOOR, AND I WOULD ORDER A KIDS' MEAL.

WHEN MY PARENTS TOOK ME TO THE DEPARTMENT STORE...

...COLLECT THE FLAGS FROM KIDS' MEALS?

WHEN YOU WERE A LITTLE BOY, DID YOU EVER...

I HAD DECIDED THAT WHEN I GOT TWENTY FLAGS, I COULD MAKE A WISH THAT WOULD COME TRUE. I MADE IT UP TO NINETEEN.

BUT BEFORE I COULD GET THAT LAST FLAG, MY PARENTS DIED IN AN ACCIDENT.

チョコ

SIGN: CHOCOLATE

AFTER THAT, I WENT TO A HORRIBLE ORPHAN-AGE...

...AND WHEN I ESCAPED, THE ONE WHO SAVED ME...

.....

I HAD NO IDEA...

...WAS THE LATE HIFUMI TAKANO-SENSEI...

!!

AND TOMOR-ROW...

...I'LL LOSE HIM.

SO THAT'S WHY YOU'RE SO PASSIONATE ABOUT THE HINAMIZAWA SYNDROME RESEARCH.

BUT I

...I'VE LOST GRANDPA'S RESEARCH.

AFTER EVERYTHING I'VE BEEN THROUGH...

...IT LOOKS LIKE...I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO GET THAT LAST FLAG...

TAKANO-SAN...

THAT IS THE BEAUTY OF THE CAMERA.

IT HELPS US SEE THE LITTLE HAPPINESSES ...THAT WE MISSED BEFORE.

HA HA HA HA HA...

I JUST GOT HERE MYSELF!

TAKANO-SAN, HELLO!

I-I LOVE...

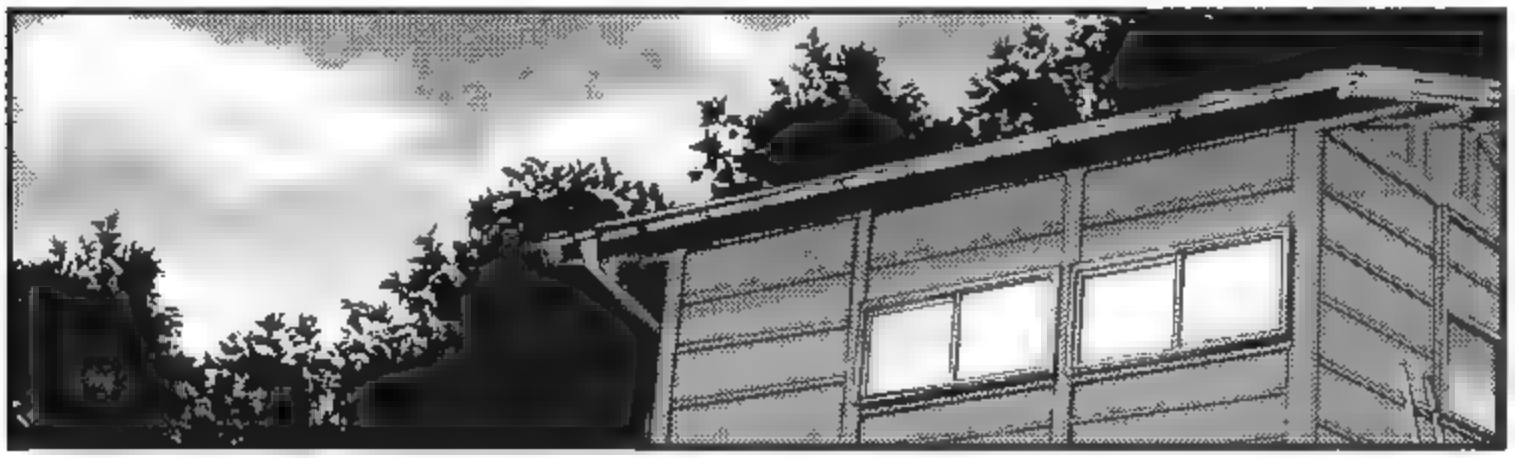
TAKANO-SAN!

THERE'S NO TURNING BACK...

I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE FESTIVAL TOMOR-ROW.

DR. IRIE.

I'M SURE IT WILL BE MAGNIFICENT.



YES...IT WAS THE FIRST I'D HEARD OF IT TOO.
ALTHOUGH APPARENTLY SHE ISN'T RELATED BY BLOOD.
MIYO TAKANO... IS HIFUMI TAKANO'S GRAND-DAUGH-TER?
WHAT DID YOU SAY?

...I'VE BEEN COMING HERE TO MEET WITH AKASAKA-SAN IN HIS HIDEOUT.
UNDER THE GUISE OF VISITING THE SICK RIKA-CHAN...

YES. TAKANO-SAN...

...IS OUR ENEMY.

THEN IT'S JUST AS RIKA-CHAN SUR-MISED ...

I SEE... THAT MAKES HER MOTIVE EVEN CLEAR-ER.

NOW I CAN UNDER-STAND.

.....

...THAT I SAID SOME INSENSITIVE THINGS THAT HURT HER FEELINGS.

AND IN MY IGNORANCE, IT'S POSSIBLE...

I UNDER-STAND WHY SHE WAS SO OBSESSED WITH THE RESEARCH ...

AND THEN... MAYBE IT WOULDN'T HAVE TURNED INTO THIS...

.....

I'M THE DIRECTOR OF THE FACILITY. IF ONLY I'D BEEN ABLE TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH HER SO THAT WE COULD HAVE TALKED MORE.

I MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO EASE SOME OF THE PAIN IN HER HEART...

IT WON'T DO ANY GOOD TO THINK LIKE THAT NOW.

BESIDES, THERE HASN'T BEEN A DISASTER YET.

THERE ARE STILL THINGS WE CAN DO.

YES...

HE'S RIGHT. IT ALL STARTS TOMOR-ROW.

IT'S NOT OVER YET.

GU. (CLENCH)

ｸﾞｯ

OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE WILL END AT THE FIFTH YEAR.

WE'LL SEE TO THAT.

PLEASE LISTEN CAREFULLY.

NOW I'M GOING TO TELL YOU HOW WE CAN CONTACT EACH OTHER IN AN EMERGENCY.

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

OKONOGI LAND-SCAPING

DR. IRIE HAS LEFT R'S HOME.

GOOD. KEEP UP SURVEIL-LANCE.

KEEPING WATCH ON A LITTLE GIRL IS DEFINITELY NOT MY IDEA OF FUN.

UNDER-STOOD, COM-MANDER OKO-NOGI.

DO (THUMP)

GATA (RATTLE)

I'M A COMBAT GUY. I'VE SPECIAL-IZED IN DIRTY DEALINGS MY WHOLE LIFE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT I DID WRONG TO LAND MYSELF A JOB AS THE LEADER OF THE WILD DOGS INTEL UNIT...

THE LAST TIME I USED MY GUN MUST'VE BEEN FIVE YEARS BACK.

カチャ
CKACLICK

...BUT IT'S GOTTEN ME AWAY FROM THE ACTION.

AGAINST THE FAT, OLD MAN...

...AND THE WET-BEHIND-THE-EARS DETECTIVE.

I'VE BEEN LONGING FOR THE

ONE THAT WILL SATISFY MY PRIDE...

GIVE ME A REAL BATTLE...

COMMANDER, PHONE FOR YOU.

NIYARI (SNEER)

IT'S A WOMAN CALLING HERSELF *NOMURA-SAN.*

IT'S LOOKING MORE AND MORE LIKE TOMORROW IS GOING TO BE A FUN DAY.

OOISHI-SAN CALLED.

THE SONO-ZAKI ESTATE

KANA

KANA

KANA

CHIRP

OPERATION FORTY-EIGHT HOURS WILL PROCEED ACCORDING TO PLAN.

HE'S GOING TO "LEAK" THE FAKE REPORT THAT RIKA-CHAN IS DEAD.

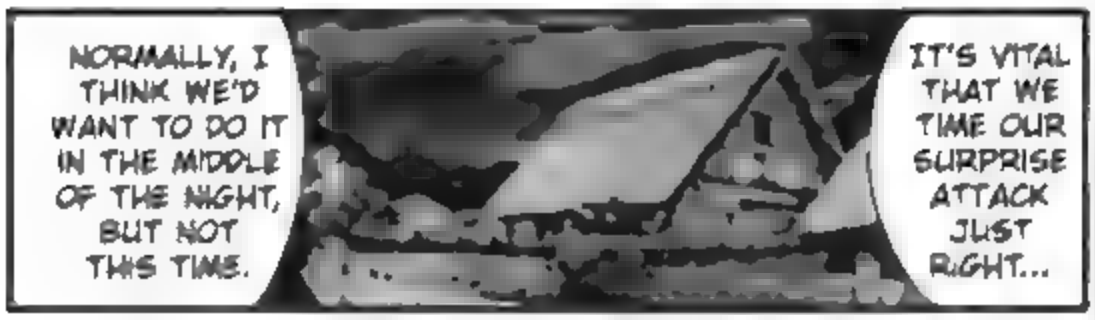
I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

THAT'S OUR OOISHI-SAN. HE REALLY BROUGHT IT ALL TO-GETHER.

WE'LL GIVE YOU SOME BIG FIRE-WORKS!! I'M TOTALLY PUMPED! AND HE SAYS OTHER GUYS AT THE PRECINCT ARE GUNG HO TO HELP OUT TOO.

JUST A FEW DAYS AGO, I WAS READY TO GIVE IN COMPLETELY TO MY DESTINY.

TO THINK THAT EVERY-THING WOULD CHANGE SO DRASTICALLY IN JUST A FEW DAYS.


NORMALLY, I THINK WE'D WANT TO DO IT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, BUT NOT THIS TIME.
IT'S VITAL THAT WE TIME OUR SURPRISE ATTACK JUST RIGHT...

RIGHT
THEN THE NEXT MOST IMPORTANT MATTER OF BUSINESS IS HOW TO TIME THE 'TRAP'

THERE'S A MUCH MORE IDEAL TIME FRAME.

AND THAT'S BEFORE SUNRISE.

BE-FORE SUN-RISE...

A DAWN AMBUSH.

YOU KNOW YOUR STUFF.

EXACTLY. INSTEAD OF THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, WE ATTACK AT DAWN.

WHEN PEOPLE ARE STILL HALF-ASLEEP, THEIR JUDGMENT IS IMPAIRED.

WE'LL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THAT.

IT'S LIKE EVERY MAN'S LIFELONG DREAM TO TAKE PART IN ONE OF THOSE!!

A DAWN AMBUSH... RRRAH! WHAT THE HECK, MAN!!?

YEAH, THAT SHOULD BE A GOOD TIME!

BEFORE SUNRISE...

LET'S DO IT, SIR!

OH-HO-HO! I COULDN'T ASK FOR BETTER TIMING!

ALLLL RIGHT!

VON (SHWP)

SO MAKE SURE TO STAY IN THE BEST POSSIBLE CONDITION, MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY!

I WANT YOU ALL READY TO ADAPT IMMEDIATELY TO ANY SITUATION!

THINGS WILL PROBABLY GET CRAZY IN A HURRY!

AND DON'T FORGET!!

IF THE ENEMY GETS AWAY WITH THEIR PLOT, THE WHOLE VILLAGE COULD BE DESTROYED!

WE BEGIN AT 0400 HOURS!

I ORDER THE COMMENCEMENT OF OPERATION FORTY-EIGHT HOURS!!

AS YOUR CLUB PRESIDENT, MION SONOZAKI!

GYAAA

THE FATE OF HINA-MIZAWA RESTS ON THIS ONE BATTLE!!

HEY, HANYU ...

YEAH !!

AFTER REPEATING THE SAME SCENARIO SO MANY TIMES, I HAD COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN.

NO, WE HAVEN'T. THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN LOTS OF FEELINGS IN THIS WORLD.

...COME TOGETHER IN ONE DAY LIKE THIS BEFORE, HAVE WE...?

WE'VE NEVER SEEN SO MANY FEELINGS...

AND EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM HAS FEELINGS THAT ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO THAT INDIVIDUAL.

BUT THERE ARE ENOUGH PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD TO MAKE YOUR HEAD SPIN.

...WHAT KIND OF WORLD WILL WE SEE?

WHAT KIND OF FRAGMENT WILL WE BE GIVEN?

YES. AND IF ALL OF THESE FEELINGS HAVE COME TOGETHER...

THOSE FEELINGS ARE ALL COMING TOGETHER AND FORMING THIS WORLD...THIS FRAGMENT.

NOW THE TIME HAS COME.

THE TIME TO OPEN THE DOOR...

...TO JUNE 19, 1983.

WILL TAKANO EMERGE VICTORI-OUS?

OR WILL WE?

THE LONGEST DAY IN HINAMIZAWA IS ABOUT TO BEGIN!!

©07th Expansion presents. Welcome to Ryukishi07.

ABOUT THE "FESTIVAL ACCOMPANYING" ARC: RUGGED AUSTERITY AND PASSION

ORIGINAL STORY, SUPERVISOR: RYUKISHI07

HELLO, I'M RYUKISHI07.

OOISHI IS A CHARACTER WITH FLAVOR. HE HAS A RUGGED AUSTERITY UNIQUE TO OLDER MEN. HIS ELDERLY POINT OF VIEW AND SPEECH PATTERN LEAVE A DEEP IMPRESSION, AND HE GIVES OFF THE AURA OF SOMEONE WITH A BROAD PERSPECTIVE. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, HE HASN'T FORGOTTEN THE PASSION OF HIS YOUTH, AND HE WORKS HARD TO SOLVE THE MURDERS BEFORE HE RETIRES. AND BECAUSE OF THAT, HE IS FACED WITH THE PROBLEM OF HIS PENSION—A PROBLEM VERY FAR REMOVED FROM THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE.

HIS TRUE FEELINGS, THE IMAGE HE'S SET UP FOR HIMSELF, AND HIS FUTURE LIVELIHOOD...AFTER MUCH INNER CONFLICT AND TURMOIL, OOISHI WILL MOST LIKELY STILL CONTINUE TO PRESS TOWARD SOLVING THE MURDERS. HE WILL FINALLY REACH THE TRUTH IN THIS, THE "FESTIVAL ACCOMPANYING" ARC.

I HOPE HE EXPOSES THE TRUTH, RETIRES, AND LIVES HIS GOLDEN YEARS IN PEACE...NN-FU-FU.

THANK YOU FOR READING THIS FAR. THE DAY OF THE COTTON DRIFTING IS ALMOST UPON US, AND THE CLUB MEMBERS ARE MOVING INTO POSITION FOR THEIR COUNTERATTACK. I WILL DO MY BEST TO DRAW THE HEATED DEVELOPMENTS. I HOPE YOU WILL ENJOY IT.

AS I DRAW THE ANSWER ARCS WHILE LISTENING TO THE HIGURASHI SOUNDTRACK, SOMETIMES I FIND MYSELF LOOKING BACK ON THE QUESTION ARCS. WHEN I FIRST PLAYED THROUGH THE QUESTION ARC VISUAL NOVELS, THEY WERE SPOOKY, TERRIFYING, AND MYSTERIOUS—EVERYTHING YOU'D WANT TO HELP YOU FEEL A CHILL IN THE SUMMER—AND I COULD GET IT ANY TIME OF YEAR. LOOKING BACK, SOMETIMES I'LL BE OVERWHELMED BY A SLIGHTLY DELAYED FEELING OF "RENA'S SO GREAT WHEN SHE'S FLIPPED OUT" (I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF), BUT THE EXTREME VARIATIONS IN TEMPERATURE, CHILLING VERSUS NONCHILLING, ARE WHAT MAKE HIGURASHI SO APPEALING. I THINK THAT IF I WERE TO ALTERNATELY DRAW QUESTION-AND-ANSWER ARCS, I COULD EXPERIENCE A MENTAL ROLLER-COASTER RIDE. IT MAKES ME WANT TO FIND TIME TO PLAY THROUGH THE QUESTION ARCS AGAIN.

HIGURASHI TAUGHT ME A LOT ABOUT THE CHARM OF PENALTY GAMES AND VARIOUS DIFFERENT KINDS OF MOE. I THINK FONDLY ON THE DAYS WHEN I HAD SOMEONE TELL ME WHERE TO FIND MAID CAFES AND MAID BARS IN AKIHABARA, AND I RUSHED TO THEM TO UNDERSTAND BETTER THE APPEAL OF HIGURASHI.

KARIN SUZURAGI

-SPECIAL THANKS-

-ORIGINAL STORY, SUPERVISOR-
RYUKISHI07-SAMA, BT-SAMA, YATAZAKURA-SAMA, TOKIBI-SAMA, TSUBAKI NARUSE-SAMA, NEKOZAKURA-SAMA, KAKUMU-SAMA

-MY EDITORS-
KOIZUMI-SAMA, KUBOTA-SAMA

-MY STAFF-
JUN AKAGAMI-SAMA, SHIGETOMO TANAKURA-SAMA, NAYU Y-SAMA, NIWAKO-SAMA, NODA-SAMA, TOMOKA FURUTA-SAMA, YF-SAMA, YO-SHUN-SAMA

AND YOU!

Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY
FESTIVAL ACCOMPANYING ARC

CHAPTER 25: THE BATTLE BEGINS

RRR RRRR

JUNE 19, EARLY DAWN

GACHA (KACHAK)

THE PHONE...?

AT THIS HOUR...?

I'm so sorry to wake you up, Major Takano!

But we have a prob-lem!!

RIKA FURUDE WAS FOUND DEAD!!

CHAPTER 25: THE BATTLE BEGINS

RE-PORT!

ドン!!

DAN (WHAM)

WHAT IS THE MEAN-ING OF THIS!?

BAN (SLAM)

..APPAR-ENTLY SHE HAD BEEN DEAD FOR MORE THAN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS.

... AND ...

...A BODY WAS IDENTIFIED AS BE-LONGING TO R.

AT 4:15 THIS MORNING IN THE OKI-NOMIYA PRE-CINCT...

...THEN EVERY VILLAGER IN HINAMIZAWA MUST BE IN THE FINAL STAGES OF THE SYN-DROME!!

IF THAT'S TRUE...

THAT'S IMPOS-SIBLE.

THE QUEEN DIED MORE THAN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS AGO...

WE THOUGHT WE WERE, BUT...

WEREN'T YOU WATCH-ING HER!?

RIKA FURUDE IS AT HOME IN BED WITH A COLD!

THAT CAN'T BE TRUE!

BUT ACCORDING TO OUR NTEL, THE TIME OF DEATH IS EXTREMELY RELIAB_E—IT CAME DIRECT FROM FORENSICS

BAN

!!!

GYUU (CLENCH)

AND THAT MEANS THAT GRANDPA'S RESEARCH WAS ALL FALSE.

...IT MEANS THAT THE QUEEN CARRIER'S DEATH WON'T CAUSE A MASS OUT-BREAK.

ON THE OFF CHANCE THAT IT IS TRUE...

THIS HAS GOT TO BE A RUSE!

AND IF GRANDPA'S RESEARCH WAS ALL FALSE...

BOTA (DRIP)

©

...AND GRANDPA'S RESEARCH WILL BE ABANDONED!!

...THEN THE CLIENT WILL LOSE INTEREST...

GYUU (SQUEEZE)

HOW DID SHE GET WIND OF THIS!?

TCH...

GIRI (GRIT)

SEND SOME-ONE TO OKINOMIYA TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THAT BODY!!

I'LL TAKE IT IN MY OFFICE!

ZA (ZSH)

YOU HAVE A CALL FROM NOMURA IN TOKYO!

MAJOR TAKA-NO!

BIKU (FLINCH)

IMMEDI-
ATELY!!

BAN
(SLAM)

OKO-
NOGI
LAND-
SCAPING

YOU'RE
SURE
THERE'S
SOMEONE
INSIDE
THE R
HOME!?

CHECK
AGAIN
!!

TCH...

IT'S EASY ENOUGH TO CONFIRM WITH THE DOCTOR.

BUT WITH NO OTHER WITNESSES, WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TO DENY THIS BIZARRE REPORT.

IF WE DON'T DO SOMETHING, THE TOP BRASS MIGHT NOT WANT TO GO THROUGH WITH OPERATION APOCALYPSE.

WE CAN CONFIRM THAT THE LIGHTS HAVE GONE ON AND OFF DURING THE PAST TWO DAYS.

BUT THE ONLY ONE WHO SAW R IN PERSON WAS DR. IRIE WHEN HE WENT TO CHECK IN ON HER.

IF WE CAN CONFIRM THAT RIKA FURUDE IS STILL ALIVE, THAT WILL PUT AN END TO ALL OF THIS.

IF WE GO NOW, WE HAVE A SMALL WINDOW OF TIME.

COM-MANDER, SHOULD WE BREAK INTO R'S HOME?

AND SHE WON'T APPROVE ANY-THING UNTIL WE KNOW WHAT'S GOIN' ON AT OKINOMIYA PRECINCT.

WE CAN'T DO THAT WITHOUT THE MAJOR'S APPROVAL!

COM-MAND-ER!

GET EIGHT MEN INTO POSI-TION!

PUT MORE MEN ON STAKEOUT AT R'S HOME SO WE'LL BE READY WHEN THE ORDER COMES TO BREAK IN.

THERE'S A FESTIVAL ON THE GROUNDS TODAY.

WE CAN CONTINUE SURVEILLANCE, BUT A BREAK-IN WILL LIKELY BE IMPOSSIBLE UNTIL LATE TONIGHT.

BANNERS: COTTON DRIFTING FESTIVAL

TCH, WHAT?

WELL, THAT'S JUST GREAT TIMING.

WAIT.

THAT IS GREAT TIMING. TOO GREAT...

AND THAT'S WHY THEY'RE ALWAYS ABLE

PEOPLE ALWAYS STOP AND TAKE A DEEP BREATH RIGHT BEFORE PLUNGIN' IN TO ATTACK...

WHOEVER OUR ENEMY IS...

...IF THEY READ OUR MOVES THAT CLOSELY, THEIR LEADER MUST REALLY KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOIN'.

IF WE'RE PLANNIN' TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE TODAY

THIS IS SOME KIND OF UP-BEAT ATTACK

BUT SOMETHING BEAT US TO THE PUNCH

...DON'T TELL ME FIRST LIEUTENANT TOMITAKE IS...?

MAJOR TAKANO WAS LOOKING FOR HIM TOO.

...WASN'T AT THE LAST MEETING WE HAD AT THE CLINIC.

COME TO THINK OF IT, FIRST LIEUTEN-ANT TOMI-TAKE...

K1 (GLARE)

I THINK WE'VE BEEN HAD!!

BA (FWD)

FIND TOMI-TAKE !!!

OKI-NOMIYA PRE-CINCT

WHAT'S GOING TO JUMP OUT AT US NOW THAT WE'VE MADE SO MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTH-ING...?

NN FU FU.

ALL RIGHT. THERE'S NO TURNING BACK NOW.

...THEN OUR ENEMY WILL HAVE HAD THE RUG PULLED OUT FROM UNDER THEM. THEY'LL RUSH OVER HERE IN A PANIC, TRYING TO FIND OUT THE TRUTH.

IF WHAT RIKA-SAN AND HER FRIENDS SAY IS TRUE...

WITH THE HELP OF THE OLD MEDICAL EXAMINER, WE'VE LEAKED FALSE INFORMATION ABOUT RIKA FURUDE'S DEATH.

OOTAKA FROM THE PREFECTURAL POLICE IS COMING, AND HE WANTS US TO LET HIM VERIFY THE I.D. OF RIKA FURUDE'S BODY!!

BAN (SLAM)

OO-ISHI-SAN! I JUST GOT WORD!

THAT WAS FAST.

ZA (SHFF)

ZAWA (MURMUR)

ZAWA

ZAWA

...WELL, WELL, WELL.

NA HA HA HA!

GOOD MORNING, OOTAKA-KUN!

HEY THERE!

...

...BUT ...

ZA (SHFF)

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, OOISHI-SAN.

I MAY BE YOUNGER THAN YOU ARE...

...BUT I AM NOT IN A POSITION WHERE I SHOULD HEAR YOU ADDRESS ME THAT WAY.

...PLEASE STOP CALLING ME OOTAKA-KUN.

PREFECTURAL POLICEMAN OOTAKA.

ONE OF THE "GREAT ELITE" WHO ONLY CARES ABOUT ACADEMIC HISTORY AND WORK RECORDS.

NOW, NOW.

HE'S JUST AS INSUFFERABLE AS EVER...

I WOULD LOVE TO STAY AND CHAT, BUT I'M HERE ON URGENT BUSINESS.

BUT HE'S PROBABLY JUST BEING USED... I BET HE DOESN'T KNOW ANY OF THE DETAILS.

TO THINK HE'S AN ENEMY SPY...

I POLITELY REFUSE.

WHAT ...!?

I ALREADY HAVE THE CHIEF'S PERMISSION, OF COURSE.

I HOPE YOU'LL ALLOW ME TO CONFIRM THE IDENTITY OF THE JANE DOE YOU FOUND.

IT LOOKS LIKE WE ACCIDENTALLY LET IT LEAK OUT THAT WE HAVE A POSITIVE I.D. ON THE BODY.

WE'LL NEED A LITTLE MORE TIME BEFORE WE CAN RELEASE THE FULL AUTOPSY REPORT.

WE'RE STILL WORKING ON THE AUTOPSY.

WE NEED TO KEEP THAT WINDOW OPEN AS LONG AS POSSIBLE SO WHEN THE ENEMY SHOWS ITS TAIL, MR. TOMITAKE WILL GRAB IT.

NOW IS OUR ONLY OPPORTUNITY TO SHAKE UP THE ENEMY— WHEN THEY STILL CAN'T DISPROVE THE POSSIBILITY THAT RIKA FURUDE IS DEAD.

THE SECOND HE DISCOVERS THAT WE FAKED RIKA FURUDE'S DEATH...

...THIS WHOLE OPERATION IS OVER.

I CAN'T LET THIS MAN GET PAST ME.

TO GIVE US MORE TIME, I HAVE TO STOP THE ENEMY'S ADVANCE TROOPS.

YOU SHOULD JUST WAIT FOR THE REPORT.

AND WHAT GIVES YOU THE AUTHORITY TO GO IN THERE? YOUR TURF IS OVER IN GOGURA.

WHA...!? WH-WHAT GIVES YOU THE AU-THORI-TY!?

NO.

THEN ALLOW ME TO OB-SERVE THE AUTOP-SY!

I AM HERE ON A TOP SECRET INVESTIGA-TION ON BEHALF OF THE PRE-FECTURAL POLICE!!

WHY CAN'T YOU TAKE ORDERS FROM THE PREFEC-TURAL POLICE!?

BA-CLOOM

ISN'T THAT ONLY PROPER, OOTAKA-KUN?

NGH ...!

WHAT ...?

SPOILED LITTLE EGGHEAD BRAT...

SU
(SHFF)

ZAWA
(MURMUR)

WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

WHA...!? I'M HERE ON A TOP SECRET INVES-TIGA-TION—

IF THAT'S TRUE...

YOU CAME HERE LIKE A GOOD LITTLE DOG FOL-LOWING HIS MASTER'S ORDERS.

OO-TAKA-KUN...

...YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING!

WH-WHAT?

IF YOUR DETECTIVE SPIRIT IS TIED UP IN THIS CASE...

...THEN MAKE ME MOVE.

YOUR MASTER IS PLOTTING SOME-THING EVIL.

...I'LL PUT IT TO YOU STRAI-GHT.

YOU PROBABLY DON'T KNOW THIS...

...BUT YOUR MASTER IS INVOLVED IN A TERRIBLE PLOT THAT WILL RUIN THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE.

THAT SCHEME IS ABOUT TO FALL APART...

...SO YOUR MASTER PANICKED AND ORDERED YOU TO INVESTI-GATE.

...KGH...

I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH THEY'RE OFFERING YOU FOR THIS.

BUT IF THAT CHUMP CHANGE WEIGHS MORE THAN YOUR DETECTIVE SPIRIT...

...I'LL NEVER FORGIVE YOU.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE BABBLING ABOUT!

THIS IS OBSTRUCTION OF AN INVESTIGATION!

YOUR CHIEF WILL BE HEARING ABOUT THIS LATER!

ドン (SHOVE)

NU (LOOM)

YOUR CAREER AS A DETEC-TIVE IS OVER!

DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH WEIGHT THAT CAR-RIES?

PITIFUL OKINOMIYA DETECTIVE DEFYING THE PRE-FECTURAL POLICE.

HEY, WAIT JUST A SECOND.

GA (GRAB)

I'M NOT DONE TALKING TO YOU.

GIRI

O-OW!

OWW!

GIRI (GRIP)

W-WILL YOU PLEASE LET GO OF ME, OOISHI-SAN!!

OH? I DIDN'T THINK I WAS HOLDING YOU THAT TIGHTLY.

IF THIS JOB CARRIES ANY GRAVITY FOR YOU...

...YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO TEAR OUT OF MY GRIP NO PROBLEM.

GIRI (GRIP)

UNH... URGH...

BUT YOU CAN'T EVEN SHAKE OFF MY LITTLE HAND.

G-GRRH ...!

O-OOISHI-SAN...

BECAUSE YOU HAVE NO DETECTIVE SPIRIT— NO PRIDE.

ME? OH, THE STAKES ARE PRETTY HEAVY FOR ME.

WHAT STAKE DO YOU HAVE IN THIS, THEN!?

GIRL

DAM-MIT...

LET GO OF ME...

GIRL

ALL THIS NON-SENSE ABOUT "DETEC-TIVE SPIRIT" ...

WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU!?

...IF YOU WANT TO GET PAST ME...

FU (FWSH)

AND THAT'S WHY...

I'M CARRYING THE LIVES OF THE TWO THOUSAND VILLAGERS IN HINAMIZAWA.

WHAT...?

...WITH HIS FIST!!

OYAS-SAN TAUGHT ME THAT...

SOME-TIMES A DETEC-TIVE'S GOTTA DO WHAT A DETEC-TIVE'S GOTTA DO!!

...BUT EVEN SO!

WHAT I'M DOING GOES AGAINST ALL THE RULES OF MY PRO-FES-SION ...

...YOU'LL NEED DETER-MINATION ENOUGH TO PUSH ASIDE TWO THOUSAND VILLAGERS !!

IS THAT ALL YOUR DETECTIVE SPIRIT AMOUNTS TO?
COME ON, WHAT'S THE MATTER?

.....

KHH ...!!

COME AND GET ME, GREEN-HORN!

Y-YOU'LL PAY FOR DOING THIS TO ME...

.....

OH, DEAR, DEAR.

I'LL TELL ASSEM-BLYMAN SONOZAKI EVERY-THING THAT HAPPENED HERE!

OOISHI-SAN, YOU'LL BE WISHING THAT ALL YOU GOT WAS A PINK SLIP!

I WAS ASKED TO COME HERE BY ASSEM-BLYMAN SONO-ZAKI HIM-SELF, YOU KNOW!

WELL, WELL, WELL.

WHO ARE YOU?

SABURO-SAN, DID YOU ASK HIM TO COME HERE?

ZAWA (MURMUR)

ZAWA

MAN... THIS IS TOO GOOD. ALL I CAN DO IS LAUGH.

...LET ME INTRO-DUCE YOU.

OOISHI-SAN, COULD YOU EXPLAIN JUST WHAT IS HAP-PENING HERE?

YOU SEE, I AM GOOD FRIENDS WITH ASSEM-BLYMAN SONOZAKI, AND—

I AM OOTAKA FROM THE PREFEC-TURAL POLICE.

PAN

PAN (PAT)

...WHY, HELLO THERE, CITI-ZENS.

OHH, SONO-ZAKI...

...HUH?

VICE PRESIDENT OF THE SHISHIBONE LADIES' KENDO ASSOCIA-TION.

THIS IS AKANE SONOZAKI-SAN.

AND THIS IS SABURO SONOZAKI-SAN.

OR RATHER, SONO-ZAKI-SENSEI.

ELECTED ASSEMBLY-MAN FOR THE SHISHI-BONE SECOND DISTRICT.

...HUH ...?

...ASSEMBLY... MAN...?

WHAT WAS THAT, THEN?

SOMETHING ABOUT YOU BEING GOOD FRIENDS WITH ME?

...AND HERE WE F ND A POLICE OFFICER THROWING AROUND THE SONOZAKI NAME...

HON-ESTLY...WE COME TO THE POLICE STATION WITH A MANAGE-MENT COM-PLAINT...

ER.. UM...

ZA (ISH)

EEP ...!!

WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A LITTLE TALK.

ZURU

ZURU (DRAG)

FUGYAAA...

NOW, THEN.

ZA (SKSH)

AHH... I GUESS THESE THINGS DO HAPPEN SOME-TIMES...

I HOPE OOTAKA-KUN WILL LEARN SOMETHING FROM ALL OF THIS.

...BUT HE PROB-ABLY WON'T.

BACK TO GUARD DUTY. I WON'T LET ANYONE THROUGH.

THE BATTLE FOR THE FATE OF HINAMIZAWA HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN...

EVERYONE... THE REST IS UP TO YOU!

DR. IRIE!

SIGN: IRIE CLINIC

"CONFIRMED HER PRESENCE"? THAT'S NOT A NICE WAY TO PUT IT.

I HEARD SHE HAD CAUGHT A SUMMER COLD, SO I WENT TO CHECK UP ON HER.

BAN (WHAM)

YOU CONFIRMED R'S PRESENCE IN HER HOME YESTERDAY, DIDN'T YOU!?

WE ONLY HAVE IRIE'S TESTIMONY TO SUPPORT ANY CLAIM THAT RIKA FURUDE IS AT HER HOME!

WE CAN'T DEPEND ON THAT...!

YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY SURE!?

SO RIKA-CHAN IS STILL IN THE HOUSE, RIGHT?

WHY WOULDN'T SHE BE...?

...Y-YES...

MAJOR. PHONE CALL FROM NOMURA-SAN IN TOKYO.

KUHI I TOLD HER TO GIVE ME SOME TIME!!

WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO TAKE IT?

NOMURA-SAN... THAT'S A NAME I HAVEN'T HEARD.

GATAL (CLATTER)

TH-THAT'S ALL RIGHT.

I'LL HANDLE THE REST...

SOMEONE ESCORT HIM TO THE DIREC-TOR'S OFFICE!!

...SO SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING. THIS IS TAKANO.

This is No-mura.

GU (GRIP)

BATAN (SLAM)

I'VE SENT IN ONE OF OUR INSIDE MEN TO THE PRECINCT, BUT I'M STILL WAITING FOR HIS REPORT.

I'VE TOLD HIM TO HURRY, SO IT SHOULDN'T BE LONG...

WELL? HAVE YOU CONFIRMED THE LEAK FROM THE OKINOMIYA POLICE?

...I'm terribly sorry.

WHEN CAN I EXPECT YOUR CALL?

Heh heh heh. Major.

Y-YES, OF COURSE I HAVE...

EH?

...YOU WOULD GET OFF THE PLANE, WOULDN'T YOU?

IF THEY FOUND SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE ENGINE BEFORE TAKEOFF...

HAVE YOU EVER RIDDEN IN AN AIRPLANE?

THEY THINK THERE MIGHT BE A DEFECT IN THE PLANE YOU ARE PILOTING...

OUR CLIENTS FEEL THE SAME.

...AND THEY'RE STARTING TO WANT TO GET OFF THIS FLIGHT.

KNH ...!

...YOUR GRAND-FATHER'S RESEARCH WILL NEVER BE ACKNOWL-EDGED.

...IF IT TAKES ANY LONGER FOR THE SITUATION TO RESOLVE, THEN THIS FLIGHT PLAN WILL BE CANCELED.

...IN OTHER WORDS

...GH!!

IF ONE GIRL DIES, THEN A WHOLE VILLAGE WILL GO MAD?

THAT'S THE STUPIDEST THING I'VE EVER HEARD!!

AFTER THAT MASSIVE RESEARCH EFFORT, IT ALL TURNS OUT TO BE A FANTASY! THAT'S HILARI-OUS!

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE? HIFUMI TAKANO, MIYO TAKANO?

I CAN'T STOP LAUGH-ING!

IT'S TOO FUNNY!

HA HA HA HA HA HA

...IT'S WHAT THEY'LL ALL SAY.

GIRI (GRIP)

NGH!

KHH ...!!!

KASHAN

ガチャン!!

I'm behind you. I want you to reach the ending that will bring you the most happiness.

カシャン

KASHAN (KACLICK)

I am your only friend.

WHERE DID IT GO WRONG ...!?

THE PLAN WAS SUPPOSED TO BE FOOL-PROOF!

GRR!

THAT WOMAN...!!

LOOK FAST-ER!!

NO, WE'RE STILL LOOK-ING!!

HAVE YOU FOUND FIRST LIEU-TEN-ANT TOMI-TAKE YET!?

IF HE'D JUST BEEN A GOOD BOY AND STAYED WHERE HE WAS...I WOULD HAVE AT LEAST LET HIM ENJOY THE FESTIVAL BEFORE HE DIED!

THAT STUPID MAN...

JIROU-SAN... HOW CAN YOU BE ABSENT AT A TIME LIKE THIS...?

DO YOU HAVE SOME-THING TO DO WITH THIS...?

GU (GRIP)

SAN (SAN)

...THEN I CAN THINK OF ANOTHER PERSON WHO MAY HAVE TURNED ON ME AS WELL.

THAT'S RIGHT... IF TOMI-TAKE'S BETRAYED ME...

HA (GASP)

HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO CONFIRMED RIKA FURUDE'S PRESENCE AT HER HOME.

IRIE IS MORE SUSPICIOUS THAN ANYONE.

DR. IRIE.

WHO CAN VERIFY THAT WHAT IRIE SAYS IS TRUE?

...AND HAS GONE INTO HIDING SOMEWHERE ELSE...

TOMITAKE HAS HIDDEN HIMSELF AWAY.

MAYBE RIKA HAD ALREADY LEFT HER HOUSE TOO...

KEEP AN EYE ON DR. IRIE!

GOOD NEWS, MA-JOR!

JUST DO IT!

DON'T TELL ME YOU THINK DR. IRIE HAS TURNED AGAINST US?

DR. IRIE?

!

...HAS FOUND TOMI-TAKE!!

OUR TOKYO INVESTI-GATION TEAM...

KACHI
KACHI
KACHI (TICK)

I WONDER WHAT TAKANO-SAN IS DOING NOW...

I'VE BEEN HIDING OUT IN THIS HOTEL FOR THREE DAYS.

THEN I CAN CALL A WATCHDOG TEAM FROM TOKYO AND STOP THE ENEMY.

NOW I MAY BE ABLE TO GET SOME PROOF OF THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST RIKA-CHAN.

...STATING THAT RIKA-CHAN, THE QUEEN CARRIER, DIED MORE THAN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS AGO.

ACCORDING TO MY INVESTIGATORS, A STRANGE REPORT CAME OUT OF OKINOMIYA PRECINCT...

IT WAS A GOOD WAY TO SHAKE UP THE ENEMY.

IT'S MOST LIKELY PART OF A PLAN RIKA-CHAN AND HER FRIENDS CONCOCTED.

...EXPOSING TAKANO-SAN'S WRONG-DOING.

GYU.

SQUEEZE

BUT... THAT WOULD MEAN...

SOMEONE IS USING HER DEVAS-TATION, THAT'S ALL.

DAMMIT... THAT'S NOT WHAT SHE REALLY WANTS.

SHE MUST BE TRYING TO BRING A MAJESTIC END TO HER GRAND-FATHER'S WORK.

MY TEAM REPORTS THAT TAKANO-SAN HAS BEEN USING LARGE SUMS OF MONEY FOR BRIBERY SCHEMES AT THE IRIE INSTITUTE.

I'VE BEEN RIGHT HERE BY YOUR SIDE, BUT I COULDN'T TAKE YOUR SADNESS AWAY.

TAKANO-SAN, I'M SORRY...

EEEEEK!

は？ HA (GASP)

WH-WHAT HAP-PENED!?

DOTA (TROMP)

ドタ

DOTA

ドタ

DOTA

DOTA

DOTA

ドタドタ

ドタ

THIS ROOM'S EMPTY! NEXT!!

SHA (SHFF)

シャ

IS SOMEONE CHECKING ALL THE ROOMS!?

I HEAR PEOPLE SLAMMING DOORS OPEN...

ZA (SKRSH)

ザ

THE WILD DOGS!!

THIS CHEAP HOTEL HAS NO CHAINS ON THE DOORS.

IF THEY USE A MASTER KEY, THEY'LL HAVE NO TROUBLE GETTING IN.

THE WILD DOGS HAVE FIGURED OUT WHERE I AM.

DAMN.

AND IF THEY CATCH ME NOW, I WON'T BE ABLE TO CALL IN ANY WATCH-DOGS.

THAT'S THE ONE THING I HAVE TO AVOID...!

...WHA ...!?

IS HE IN HERE !?

JUST HOW FIT IS HE!?

HUH!? HOW CAN ANYONE RUN THAT FAST AFTER JUMPING FROM A WINDOW!?

I'VE BEEN TRAINING MYSELF EVERY DAY FOR JUST SUCH AN OCCASION AS THIS.

IT'S NOT THAT STRANGE.

GET HIM!!

RE-QUEST-ING BACKUP!

THIS IS SKYLARK 10 TO SKYLARK 11! TARGET LOCATED!

DA

BIUN FWOOSH

GUSHA CORUNCHŌ

RRR-RAAA AGH!!

IT'S TOMI-TAKE!!

THERE HE IS!

DA (DASH)

WHAT!?

I HAVE TO STOP THE WILD DOGS' TAKE-OVER... AND...

OF COURSE THEY CAN'T. I HAVE CONVICTIONS, AND I'M GOING TO SEE THEM THROUGH.

I CAN DO THIS.

NOBODY CAN STOP ME NOW— NOT EVEN THE WILD DOGS.

THEY CAN'T STOP ME NOW.

...BEFORE SHE MAKES THIS TERRIBLE MISTAKE!!

...I HAVE TO BE THE ONE TO STOP TAKANO-SAN...

RRRRAAAUGH!!

MEKO (SMASH)

...RAN.

TOMI-TAKE...

DAN (DASH)

ダーッ

ドドドド (DODODO)

HIS CHARGE...

...WAS LIKE A LOCO-MOTIVE.

キキキィ (KIKIKI SHREECH)

GET HIM!!

DA (DASH)

STOP HIM HERE, WHATEVER IT TAKES!!!

ZA (SH-SH)

BIKU (SHOCK)

ビクッ

OUT OF MY WAY!!

HIS WAR CRY. THE CRY OF A STEAM WHISTLE.

HEH

TOMI-TAKE GRIN-NED FEAR-LESS-LY...?

NO. IT WAS NOT A GRIN.

AND WE STILL CAN'T STOP HIM!?

NO WAY!!

IM-POS-SIBLE!!

...BUT TO WARN THEM: IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GET HURT, GET OUT OF THE WAY.

WHY DOES THE HORN SOUND WHEN PEOPLE STAND IN FRONT OF A TRAIN?

NOT BE-CAUSE THEY WILL HURT THE TRAIN

WAAA-AAAH!!

RRR-AAAA-AAAH!

STEAM ENGINES DON'T SMILE!!

C62 3

OUT OF MY WAAAY !!!

ドン

CHIIIN (DING)

WE HAVE CAPTURED TOMITAKE.

THAT WAS EASY.

HEE HEE HEE.

HUH...?

UH...

BRING HIM HERE.

DON'T KILL HIM YET.

I HAVE SOME THINGS I WANT TO ASK HIM.

CHAPTER 26: ESCAPE

バン
BAN (SLAM)

WE TRAN-QUILIZED HIM SO HE'D STOP STRUG-GLING.

ドン
DO (THUD)

...WHAT IS GOING ON HERE, TAKANO-SAN?

バン!
BAN

I WONDERED WHY I HADN'T SEEN JIROU-SAN AROUND. APPARENTLY HE'S BEEN OVERCOME BY THE TERMINAL SYMPTOMS.

I WAS RIGHT TO SEND THE WILD DOGS TO FIND HIM.

GIRORI (GLARE)

NGH...

T-TERMINAL SYMP-TOMS?

OH NO...

I WILL ADMINISTER THE MEDICINE TO HIM NOW.

I DO HOPE IT WORKS.

THEY'VE CAPTURED TOMITAKE-SAN.

THIS IS BAD.

バタン
BATAN (SLAM)

HE'S NOT IN THE FINAL STAGES— SHE'S LYING.

THEY MUST HAVE FIGURED OUT THAT HE WAS GOING TO CALL IN SOME WATCHDOGS.

GU (TENSE)
ﾅ!!...

IF I DON'T DO SOME-THING...

...THEY'LL KILL HIM...!

I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING— ANYTHING— TO HELP TOMITAKE-SAN...

OUR PLAN WILL END IN FAILURE.

IF WE LOSE TOMITAKE-SAN, WE WON'T BE ABLE TO CONTACT TOKYO OR CALL IN A WATCHDOG TEAM.

GYUUUU (CLENCH)

WOULD THAT EVEN BE POSSI-BLE...?

SHOULD I SLIP PAST THE WILD DOGS AND GET HIM OUT...?

BUT WHAT DO I DO...?

は HA (GASP)...

IRIE-SENSEI. BE VERY CAREFUL.

RIGHT. AKASAKA-SAN WARNED ME.

IF YOU FEEL EVEN THE SLIGHTEST SENSE OF FOREBODING, YOU SHOULD CONSIDER IT AN EMERGENCY.

IT'S VERY DIFFICULT TO SENSE WHEN YOU ARE IN DANGER. IF YOU CARRY ON ASSUMING YOU'RE SAFE, YOU MIGHT LOSE YOUR CHANCE TO CALL FOR HELP.

WHEN THAT HAPPENS, GET OUT OF THE LAB AND MEET AT THE GONOZAKIS'.

...IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW.

THE EMERGENCY THAT AKASAKA-SAN WAS TALKING ABOUT...

I SHOULD GO TO THE OTHERS FOR HELP.

IT WOULD BE FOOLISH TO TRY TO HELP TOMITAKE-SAN ON MY OWN.

I'LL GO TO OUR EMERGENCY RENDEZVOUS POINT AND WORK OUT A PLAN WITH EVERYONE'S HELP!

THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME, BUT IT SHOULD BE LONG ENOUGH.

ZA (SKSH)

SHE PLANS TO KILL HIM TONIGHT TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE THE FIFTH YEAR'S CURSE.

TAKANO-SAN PROBABLY WON'T KILL TOMITAKE-SAN RIGHT AWAY.

GU (GRIP)

PI (BEEP)

PO (BOOP)

...I SHOULD CONTACT AKASAKA-SAN AND LET HIM KNOW WE HAVE AN EMERGENCY...

THAT BEING THE CASE, BEFORE I MAKE MY ESCAPE...

GACHA (KACHAK)

R'S RESI-DENCE?

MAJOR TAKANO! A CALL IS BEING MADE FROM THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE TO R'S RESI-DENCE!

-RING-

キュ

KYU (PRESS)

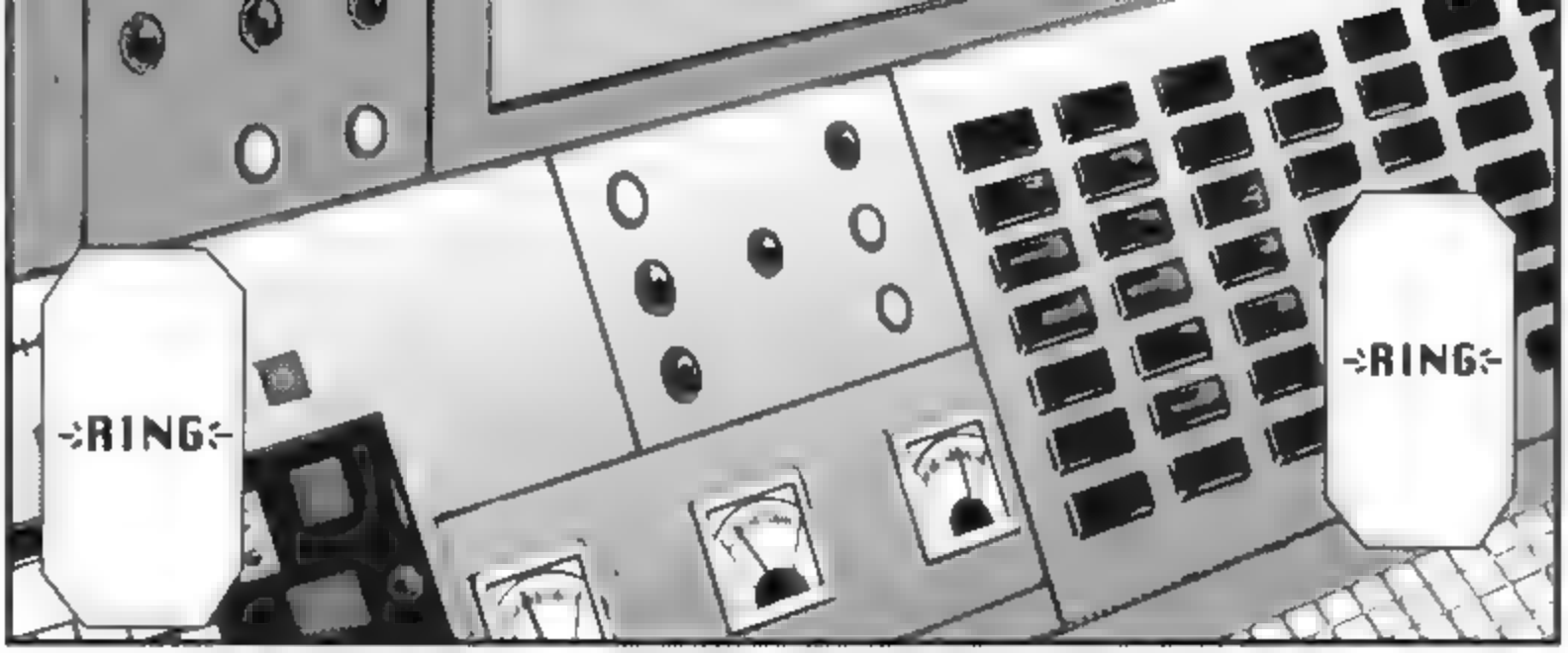
PATCHING THROUGH THE AUDIO.

WE WIN.

IF RIKA FURUDE ANSWERS THE PHONE, WE CAN CONFIRM THAT SHE'S STILL ALIVE.

WHAT AN IDIOT. DOESN'T HE KNOW THAT WE'VE BUGGED ALL THE PHONE LINES?

IRIE MUST BE PAN-ICKING NOW THAT WE'VE GOT JIROU-SAN.


RING
RING

MA-
JOR
!!

...THE CALLER WILL JUST HANG UP...
USUALLY IF NO ONE PICKS UP AFTER THAT LONG...
THAT'S ODD...
IT'S BEEN RINGING FOR MORE THAN HALF A MINUTE.

WE HAVE A VISUAL OF DR. IRIE ON THE ENTRANCE SECURITY CAMERA!!
WHAT !?

AKASAKA-SAN AND I DISCUSSED HOW TO CONTACT EACH OTHER IN AN EMERGENCY.

AND IT ISN'T TO SPEAK TO EACH OTHER OVER THE PHONE.

WE SEND A MESSAGE BY LETTING THE PHONE RING.

RRRRR

RRRRR

DA (DASH)

THE PHONE WILL ALSO WORK AS A DIVERSION TO DISTRACT TAKANO-SAN.

ZA (CSH)

...THAT WILL TELL HIM THAT THERE'S BEEN AN EMER-GENCY.

IF THE PHONE RINGS AT RIKA-CHAN'S HOUSE FOR MORE THAN THREE MIN-UTES...

ガチャ

GACHA (ACTION)

I HAVE TO USE THIS CHANCE TO MAKE MY ESCAPE!!

BAN (SLAM)

HE WENT THAT WAY! HURRY !!

THEY FOUND ME!

DAMMIT, WHY WON'T THE CAR START !!?

KACHA

ガチャ

KACHA

ガチャ

KACHA

ガチャ

GO!

GO!

ガチャ

KACHA (CLINK)

ガチャ

...IT STARTED!!

DA (DASH)

ブロロロ

BURORORORO
(VRRRRROOM)

KIKYURURURU
(SQUEEEAL)

RRRR

RRRR

RRR

HANG ON UNTIL THEN... TOMITAKE-SAN!!

WE WILL BE BACK!

RRR
RRR
RRR
R

IF THE PHONE RINGS FOR THREE MINUTES, THAT'S OUR SIGNAL THAT THERE'S BEEN AN EMERGENCY.
THAT'S THREE MIN-UTES...

SOME-THING'S HAPPENED TO IRIE-SAN!

SU (55K)

IT'S TIME TO COME OUT OF HIDING.

WE AGREED TO MEET AT THE SONOZAKIS' IN AN EMERGENCY.

GARA SLIDE

THE BATTLE BEGINS!!

A MAN? WHO IS HE?

!?

OUR TEAM REPORTS AN UNKNOWN MAN RUNNING OUT OF B'S HOME!!

MA-JOR!

W-WE...

IT DOESN'T MATTER! GO AFTER HIM AND SEIZE HIM!!

OUR SURVEIL-LANCE TEAM CAN'T KEEP UP!!

IT'S LIKE...

HQ, this is Nightingale 3.

We have visual on Irie's vehicle.

!!

...HE'S FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET!!

GRR ...!!

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON!?

R-roger that!!

...WHAT DOES THAT EVEN MEAN!!?

ANYWAY! CALL ALL NEARBY SURVEILLANCE OPERATIVES AND CATCH HIM!!

IT'S CURRENTLY EN ROUTE TO FURUDE SHRINE.

I HAVE TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO FINISH GRANDPA'S WORK...

I CAN'T LET IT END HERE.

GIRI (CLENCH)

PERMIS-SION GRANTED.

DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO STOP IRIE BEFORE ANYONE SEES HIM.

PREPARING TO FORCE A STOP.

ROGER THAT!

BURORORORO (VRRRRROOM)

BACHIN (CHAK)

SHUKAKAKAKA (RAT-A-TAT-TAT)

GU (SQUEEZE)

JAKIN (KASHINK)

GA (GARSH)

GA

GA

...ZZZ

ZA
SKFF

ZA

(SCREECH)

TARGET'S VEHICLE HAS FALLEN DOWN THE SLOPE. TARGET MAY BE DEAD.

IT'S A HIT.

バチ
BACHI
(CRACKLE)

バチ
BACHI

バチ
BACHI

バチ
BACHI

WE WILL PURSUE ON FOOT AND OVERPOWER HIM IF NEED BE.

ZA

バチ
BACHI
バチ
BACHI
バチ
BACHI
ズ
(SKDD)
NGH
...
GATA
(RATTLE)
ガタ
ヨロ
(STAGGER)
I DIDN'T THINK THEY'D BE SO QUICK TO SHOOT AT ME...
I HAVE TO GET AWAY FROM THEM SOMEHOW...
GAKU
(JERK)
ヨロ

!!
I SEE HIM! THAT WAY!!

ALL OF HINAMI-ZAWA...

MY LUNGS FEEL LIKE THEY'RE ABOUT TO EX-PLODE
I'M OUT OF EN-ERGY...
MY KNEES ARE SHAK-ING.

!!

IF I DON'T, TOMI-TAKE-SAN...
BUT I HAVE TO GET AWAY.

OOO
(WHOOSH)

-YORO
(STAGGER)

I SWORE TO MY-SELF...

I SWORE I WOULD PREVENT ANY MORE TRAGEDIES LIKE SATOSHI-KUN'S...

...BY ERADICATING HINAMIZAWA SYNDROME.

I CAN'T LET THEM CATCH ME...!!

KIKIK!!
SCREECH

BAN
CSLAM

!!

!!

SHION... SAN!!

COACH! GET IN!!

GRAB

DO THIS

BA (LOOM)

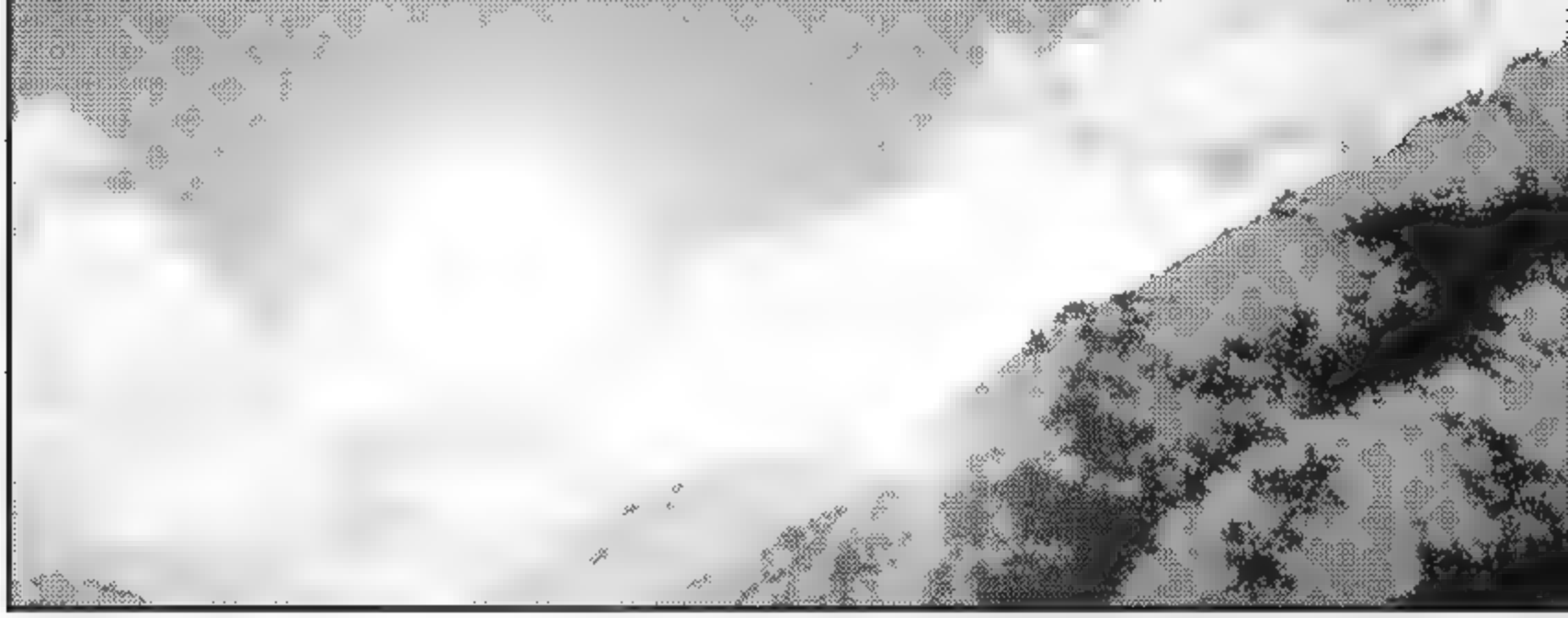
WE'RE OUT OF HERE.

VON (VRRM)

BURORORORORO (VRRRRROOM)

DAM-MIT!

CON-TACT HQ! NOW!



BURORORORO
(VRRROOM)

...N-NO!
I CAN'T GO TO THE CLINIC... TH...THE SONOZAKIS'...
PLEASE, TAKE ME TO THE SONOZAKIS'...

WHAT DID HAPPEN, COACH?
WE SAW SMOKE AND CAME TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED...

YOU'RE BADLY HURT.
WE HAD BETTER GET YOU TO THE CLINIC.
NNGH ...

SOME-THING MUST HAVE HAP-PENED.

LET'S TAKE HIM TO THE SONOZAKI ESTATE.

COACH!

DO (SLUMP)

GOT IT.

BURORORORORO

SHION-SAN, KEEP A LOOKOUT BEHIND US.

SOME-ONE MAY BE TAILING HIM.

OUR TARGET HAS BEEN PICKED UP BY A CIVILIAN VEHICLE. HE'S ON THE RUN.

BIKU (JUMP)
ビクッ

This is Phoenix 1, Okonogi. Major.

AT THIS RATE, OUR PLAN WILL—!

IMPOS-SIBLE!

HOW COULD YOU LET HIM GET AWAY...!?

DAN (SLAM)
ダン

IRIE IS GETTING AWAY...!!

OKO-NOGI! WHAT ARE THE WILD DOGS DOING!?

IT'S BEEN ONE UPSET AFTER ANOTHER.

NOT TO WORRY, MAJOR.

BURORORORO (VRRRRROOM)
ブロロロロロ...

THEN THERE'S IRIE'S UNUSUALLY CLEVER ESCAPE.

THEY STILL HAVEN'T CAUGHT THE MAN THEY SAY CAME RUNNING OUT OF THE FURUDE HOME.

AND STILL NO WORD FROM THE CONTACT WE SENT TO OKINOMIYA!

WE'VE PLANTED A TRACKING DEVICE ON DR. IRIE'S JACKET.

I DON'T THINK SO

Then follow the signal and capture him!

!!

WHAT ...!?

WE LET HIM SWIM.

Our target vehicle has turned down the narrow road in front of the water mill.

WHAT ARE YOU TALK-ING—

YOU DON'T MEAN ...

HA (GASP)

HEH HEH HEH.

LOOKS LIKE HE'S LEADING US RIGHT TO HER.

ALL UNITS, ASSEMBLE.

WE MEET AT THE SONOZAKI ESTATE.

THAT'S WHERE WE'LL FIND R.

Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY
FESTIVAL ACCOMPANYING ARC

THE TARGET VEHICLE HAS STOPPED IN FRONT OF THE SONOZAKI ESTATE.

HEE-HEE-HEE. NO DOUBT ABOUT IT.

THAT IS WHERE R IS HIDING.

THE SONOZAKI HOME IS THE BEST PLACE IN HINAMIZAWA FOR A DEFENSIVE BATTLE.

BUT THE SECOND THEY CHOSE TO TAKE REFUGE IN THERE, THEY BECAME RATS IN A TRAP.

NOW WE BEGIN OUR COUNTER-ATTACK!!

BASA (FWAP)

CHAPTER 27: BATTLE AT THE SONOZAKI ESTATE

CHAPTER 27: BATTLE AT
THE SONOZAKI ESTATE

ZA (SKSH)

...SOMETHING VERY BAD...

WHAT HAPPENED!?

K-KIDS...

TA (TMP)

COACH!

!!

THE WILD DOGS HAVE CAPTURED TOMITAKE-SAN.

IS HE ALL RIGHT?

YES, FOR NOW. THEY WILL KILL HIM TONIGHT SO IT LOOKS LIKE THE CURSE

IT LOOKS LIKE YOU ALL HAVE A STORY TO TELL US.

WE HAVE TO GET HIM OUT BEFORE THEN...

WE HAPPENED ACROSS COACH WHEN HE WAS HURT.

SHION, KASAI. WHY ARE YOU HERE?

BURORORORORO

YOU CAN COUNT ON ME. I MADE SURE NO ONE WAS FOLLOWING US.

DID YOU SEE ANYONE FOLLOW YOU HERE?

BURORORORO (VRRRRROOM)

BURORORORO

!!

WE WERE NOT FOL-LOWED! STUPID ONEE!!

BATA (FLAIL)

BATA

YOU WERE FOL-LOWED! STUPID SHION!!

EEK!

GUI YANK

HWA!?

THEY'RE COMING!!

HEY, COME ON, WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO!!?

WAAAH! RAAH!

BATA-SLAM

THE ENEMY WON'T BE ABLE TO INFILTRATE THERE, AND WE CAN KEEP AN EYE ON THE OUTSIDE.

WE HURRY TO THE BASEMENT.

HEY! KASAI!

PUT US DOWN!

GET IN THERE!!

OUR TARGET IS INSIDE THE ESTATE!

IT'S A REMODELED AIR RAID SHELTER. IT IS EXTREMELY SECURE.

THE SONOZAKI HOME HAS THAT KIND OF SECURITY!?

ZA (SKSH)

ZA

DAN (THOOM)

DA (DASH)

THEY'RE AFTER US! EVERY-BODY RUN!

THERE ARE TWO ADULTS. THE REST OF THEM ARE CHIL-DREN.

WE'LL OVER-POWER THEM.

GAAH !?

!?

DOO (WHAM)

KASAI-SAN! FOLLOW RENA AND KEI-CHAN SO YOU DON'T GET CAUGHT IN ONE OF THEM!

SA-TOKO'S TRAPS !?

WHOA !?

DOTA (TRIP)

WH-WHAT THE ...!? A TRAP !!?

THE BUSHES ARE FULL OF BOOBY TRAPS!

BE CARE-FUL!

DAMMIT! THEY'RE GOOD FOR CIVIL-IANS!

YOU GOT IT!!

...HO!

GRRR CREAK

HEAVE ...

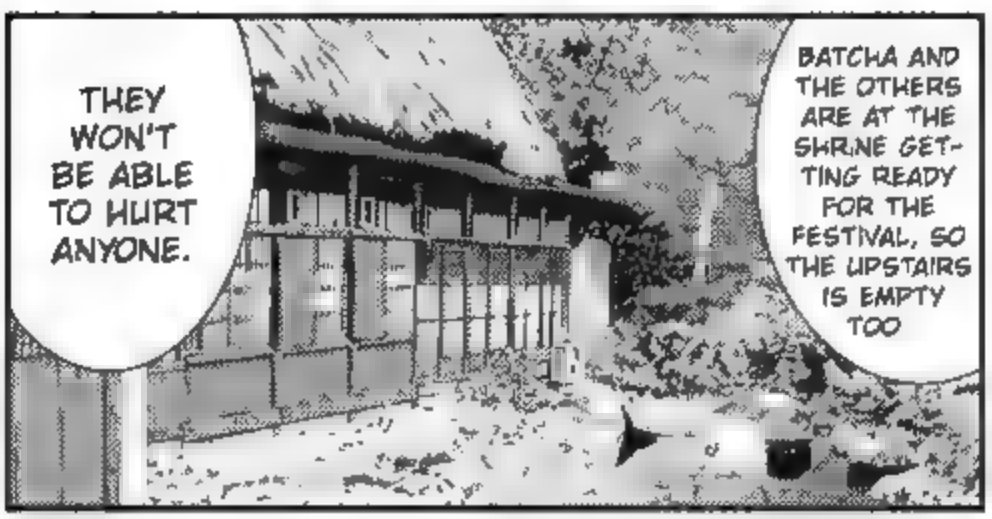
WHEW
HAAH, HAAH, HAAH

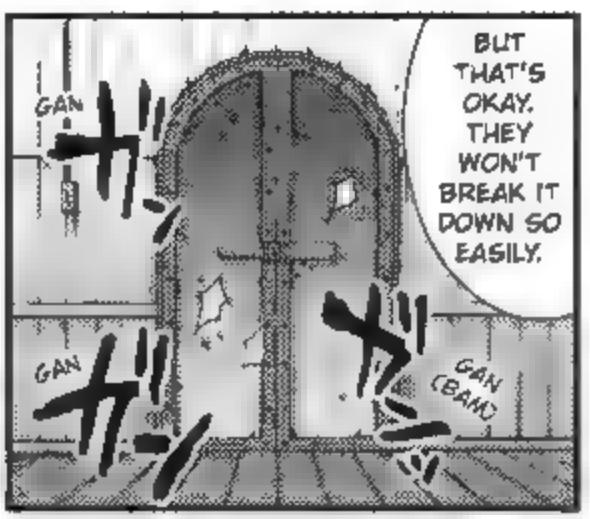
RIKA-CHAN!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, SIR!?

AND THEY'RE THE DOGS WHO WERE AFTER HER...
ARE THOSE THE WILD DOGS RIKA-CHAN WAS TALKING ABOUT?
THEY'RE SCARY!

UHH, UHH, UHH. I'M SEEING SOME BIG TROUBLE ON THE SURVEILLANCE SCREEN, SIR!

SO WE HAVE A LOT OF GUESTS OUTSIDE THAT DOOR...
WHOA... THEY'VE GOT ALMOST THIRTY GUYS THERE.
ISN'T THAT THE DOOR WE JUST CLOSED?


THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO HURT ANYONE.
BATCHA AND THE OTHERS ARE AT THE SHRINE GETTING READY FOR THE FESTIVAL, SO THE UPSTAIRS IS EMPTY TOO


GAN
BUT THAT'S OKAY. THEY WON'T BREAK IT DOWN SO EASILY.
GAN
GAN (BANG)

YEAH... THIS MIGHT BE A LOT TO TAKE IN ALL AT ONCE.

BUT YOU SEE...

YOU LEAVE ME OUT OF EVERYTHING. I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON, AND SUDDENLY I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF SOME CLIMACTIC BATTLE?

ONEE, WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON HERE?

MIIN (BUZZ)

MIN

MIN

MIN

NIGHT-INGALE 1 TO PHOENIX 1.

THE TARGET HAS ESCAPED INTO WHAT APPEARS TO BE A BOMB SHELTER.

...MAN, THOSE SONOZAKIS. I DIDN'T REALIZE THEY WERE SO DAMN RICH.

PHOENIX 1, COPY.

BURURORO (VROOOOM)

The door is made of steel. We can't break through.

NEVER MIND SURROUNDING THEM. WE HELP THEM BREAK IN.

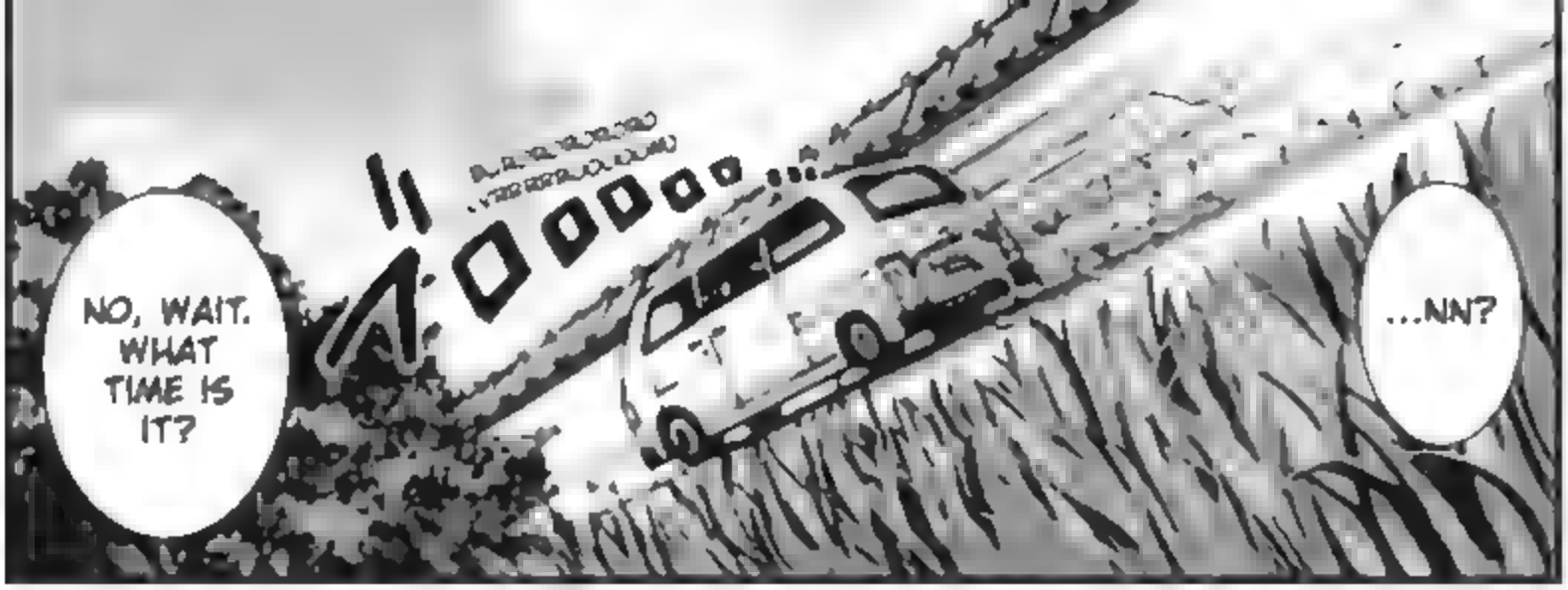
THE GROUNDS ARE TOO BIG. WE CAN'T SURROUND 'EM.

SURE, NO ONE WILL PASS BY, BUT THE BLAST WOULD BE LOUD ENOUGH TO ALERT THE VILLAGERS.

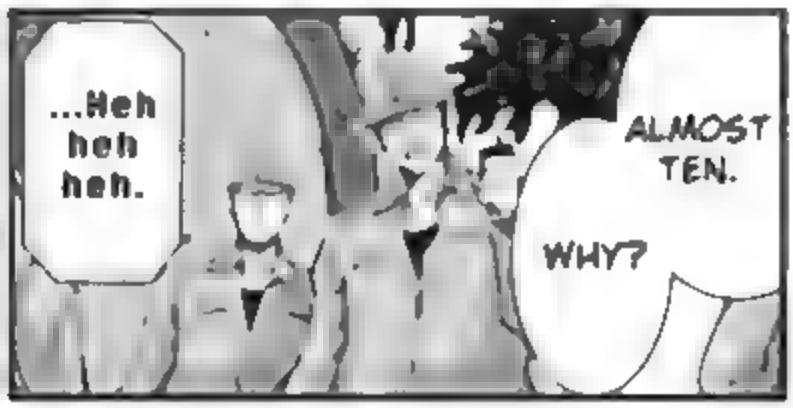
NO, WE CAN'T AFFORD TO SET OFF AN EXPLOSION HERE.

PHOENIX 7 TO PHOENIX 1.

WE HAVE SOME INDOOR-USE PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES. SHOULD WE PREPARE TO USE THEM?


NO, WAIT. WHAT TIME IS IT?
...NN?

WE CAN USE THAT.
TEN...


...Heh heh heh.
ALMOST TEN.
WHY?

PERFECT TIMING.

THEY'RE MUCH STRONGER THAN WE ARE... THIS WILL BE A TOUGH BATTLE.

NO... THEY'RE TRYING TO KILL RIKA-CHAMA...?

... YOU'RE RIGHT.

HEE HEE!

H-HE'S RIGHT, SHION! YOU CAN COUNT ON US!!

WE'LL BE FINE. THIS IS OUR CLUB WE'RE TALKING ABOUT!

RIGHT. WE SHOULD MAKE OUR NEXT MOVE.

WE SHOULD GET OUT OF HERE WHILE THE ENEMY IS BUSY, SIRS.

THEY'LL PROBABLY DO WHATEVER THEY CAN TO OPEN THAT DOOR.

WHAT DO YOU THINK THEIR NEXT MOVE WILL BE, SIR?

HAVE YOU CALLED THE POLICE?

I KNOW, ONEE!

AND IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO CONTACT OOISHI-SAN.

THE ENEMY ALREADY KNOWS EVERYTHING WE'RE UP TO HERE

WE DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THAT SPY AT THE POLICE STATION ANY-MORE.

OH YEAH! I'D FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT OUR FIRST RIGHT AS CITIZENS'

IN A SITU-ATION LIKE THIS IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO CALL THE POLICE

HE'S SURE TO COME RUN-NING!

——…

WHAT'S WRONG, MION?

KACHA

KACHA

WHAT?

...HUH?

WHAT'S GOING ON...? THE PHONE...!

...IT'S NOT MAKING A SOUND.

IF WE CAN'T USE THE PHONE, WE HAVE NO WAY TO CONTACT THE OUT-SIDE.

THIS IS BAD.

WHAT ...?

...THE CABLE MAY HAVE BEEN CUT.

...DAM-MIT! THEY GOT US.

I DIDN'T THINK THEY'D

IT'S BRIGHT DAYLIGHT OUT THERE!

THE VILLAGERS WOULD HEAR THE EXPLOSION.

BUT THEY WOULDN'T NEED TO BLOW UP THE DOOR. WOULD THEY...?

IF I KNOW OKONOGI-SAN, HE WON'T LET THEM USE EXPLOSIVES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY.

THE WILD DOGS ARE VERY [illegible]

AND TODAY IS THE COTTON DRIFTING, SO THERE ARE PLENTY OF PEOPLE OUTSIDE SOMEONE IS BOUND TO HEAR IT.

THERE'S NO SUCH THING! NO MATTER WHAT BOMB YOU USE, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO SILENCE AN EXPLOSION.

MAYBE THEY HAVE A SILENT BOMB?

AH...

AND THEY CUT OUR POWER SO WE WOULDN'T CATCH ON?

MAYBE THEY HAVE SOME WAY TO BREAK THE DOOR DOWN REALLY FAST.

THE SECURITY CAMERA'S OFFLINE TOO...

IT CAN'T BE...

THEY [illegible] THE [illegible]

BUT IF IT'S SO DARK, WON'T THEY [illegible]

...WELL, ASSUMING [illegible]

...MAYBE IT'S TO KILL OUR SECURITY SYSTEM?

I FIGURED IT OUT! I KNOW WHAT THEY'RE TRYING TO DO!!

YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF WHAT DAY IT IS.

HEH HEH...

GOOD.

COMMANDER, IT'S ALMOST TEN O'CLOCK.

THE SOUND WILL BE HEARD ALL ACROSS THE VILLAGE.

HYUUUU (WHOOSH)

...TO LET THE VILLAGERS KNOW THAT THE FESTIVAL IS HAPPENING AS PLANNED.

THEY'LL SHOOT OFF FIREWORKS AT TEN O'CLOCK...

THERE THEY ARE!!

BON

BON

BON (BOOM)

WE JUST USE THE SOUND AS CAMOUFLAGE, AND...

KACHI (KACHAK)

CHARGE !!

THE DOOR IS DOWN !!

CHARGE !!

ガ

ドカ

UWAAH!?

HURRY! THIS WAY!
THOSE BAS-TARDS REALLY DID IT!

.....!!

ONE WRONG STEP, AND YOU'RE A GONER. AND I'M NOT KIDDING.

THE ONLY THING WE HAVE TO CLIMB ON IS THIS UNSTABLE LADDER...

YOU WANT US TO GO DOWN THERE? ...HOW DEEP IS IT?

...IT'S NOT A WELL SO MUCH AS A PIT, HUH...?

IF WE GO THROUGH THERE, WE'LL COME OUT IN AN OLD WELL IN THE MOUNTAINS.

IF YOU GO DOWN FAR ENOUGH, IT BREAKS OFF INTO A SIDE TUNNEL.

I'M GOING FIRST !?

JUST A...

WELL, YOU KNOW THE MOST ABOUT THE WELL, ONEE, SO WE KNOW WHO'S GOING FIRST.

AFTER YOU.

SHION...

YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN, ONEE.

KASAI AND I WILL TAKE UP THE REAR! NOW GO! HURRY!!

WHO DID YOU EXPECT TO DO IT!?

IF EVERY-ONE HERE GOES DOWN ONE AT A TIME...

THERE MAY BE SEVERAL DOORS BETWEEN HERE AND THERE, BUT IT WON'T TAKE THEM LONG TO GET THROUGH.

NOW THAT THE DOOR HAS BEEN BREACHED, IT'S A ONE-WAY ROAD TO GET HERE.

...THE LAST ONE TO GO WON'T MAKE IT.

スー
SU (55K)

I KNOW! THAT'S WHY I WANTED TO TAKE UP THE REAR...

LET ME BE THE BIG SISTER ONCE IN A WHILE.

"SHION."

WHA ...?

BUT WE SWITCHED PLACES WHEN WE WERE LITTLE.

AND I PUSHED ALL THE RESPON-SIBILITY ONTO YOU.

YOU KNOW I'M REALLY THE OLDER SISTER. I WAS SUPPOSED TO TAKE OVER THE SONOZAKI FAMILY.

I'VE ALWAYS FELT BAD ABOUT THAT.

AND NOW I FINALLY HAVE A CHANCE TO MAKE IT UP TO YOU.

MION-SAN...

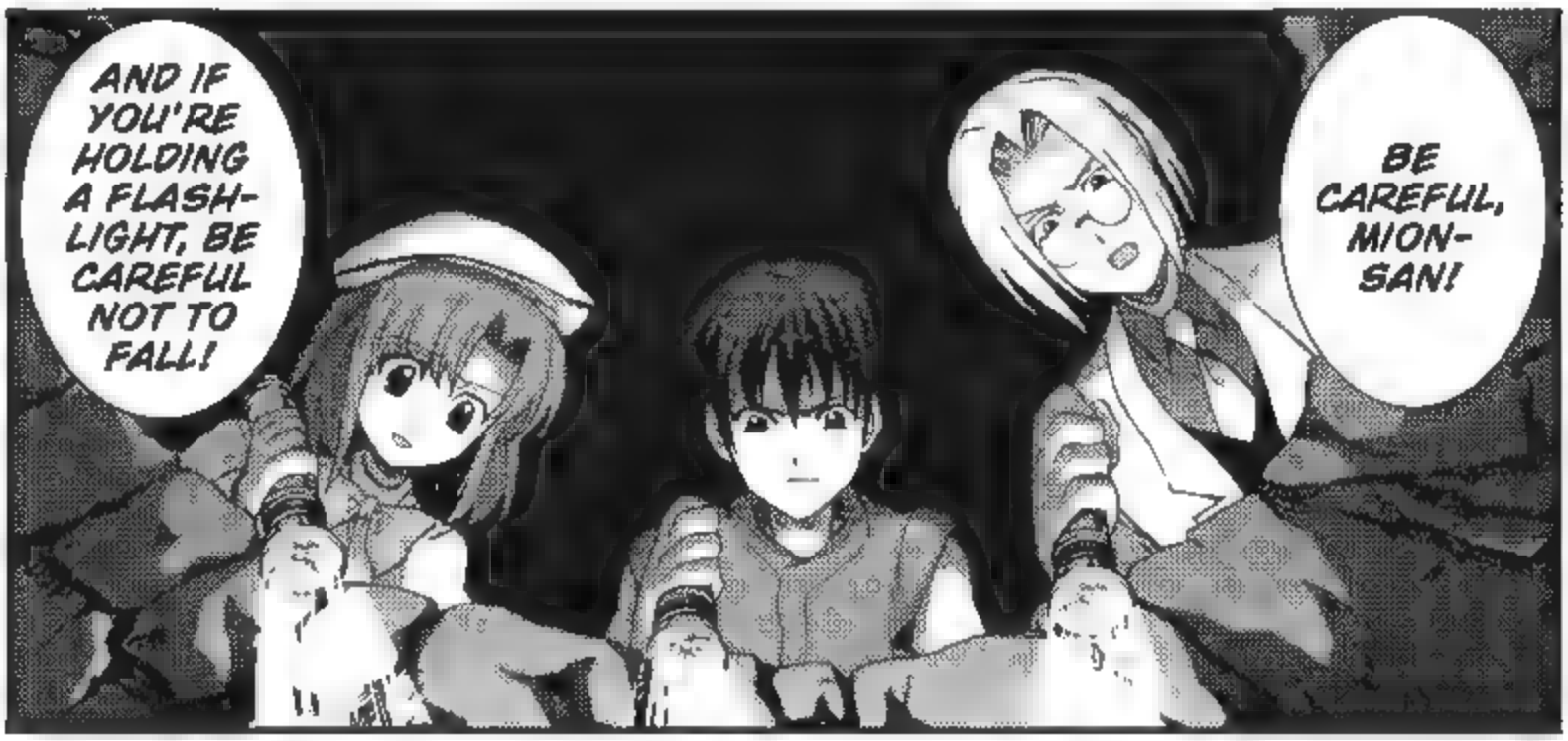
I CAN'T THINK OF A BETTER TIME TO OPEN IT.

...GIVE ME THE KEY TO THE ARMORY.

... SHION ...

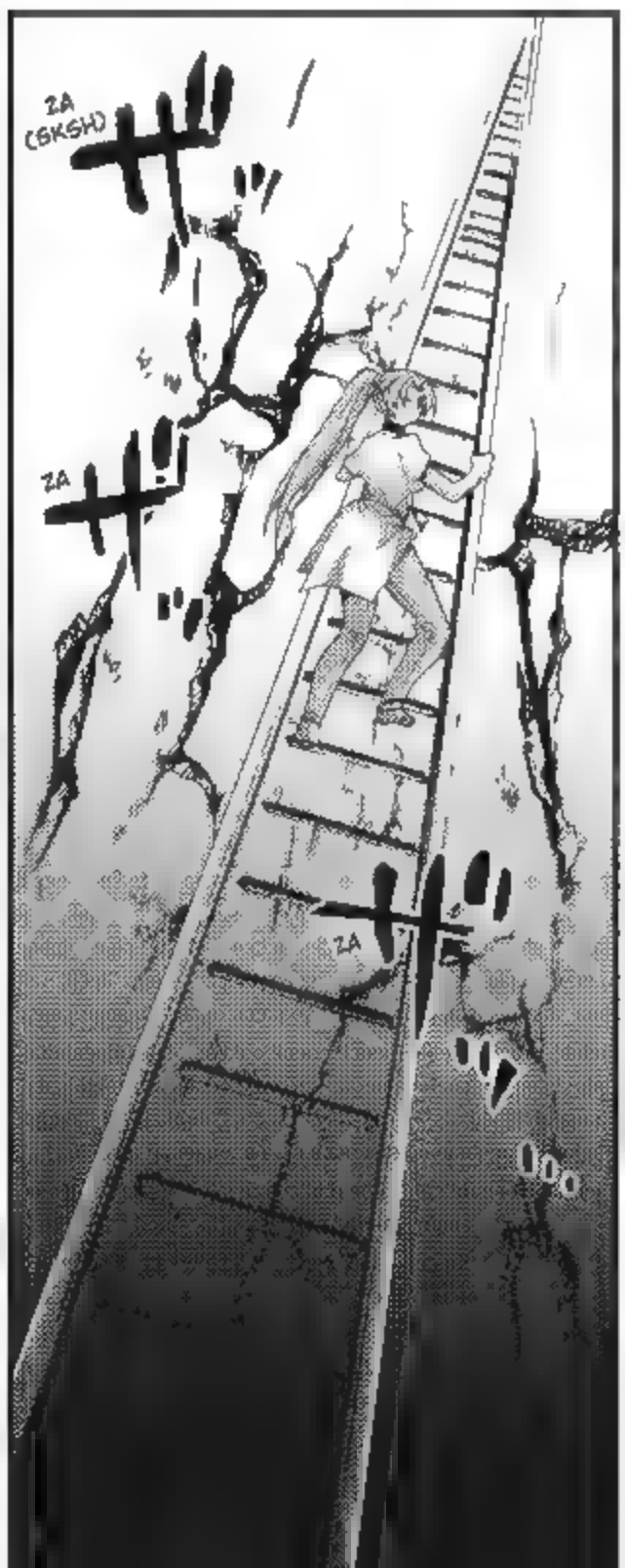
SH...

.....


AND IF YOU'RE HOLDING A FLASH-LIGHT, BE CAREFUL NOT TO FALL!
BE CAREFUL, MION-SAN!

SHION...
PLEASE BE OKAY...

FUWA (WAFT)


ZA (SKSH)
ZA
ZA

...THIS IS THE SIDE TUNNEL!!

...A BREEZE.

SEND RIKA-CHAN DOWN FIRST!!

OKAY! WE'RE GOOD TO GO!!

NO, COACH.

I CAN GO DOWN LATER. LET THE CHILDREN GO DOWN FIRST.

COACH NEXT, THEN HANYU, THEN SATO-KO!

ALL RIGHT! GO, RIKA-CHAN!

YOU KNOW THE CLINIC THE BEST OF ALL OF US. WITHOUT YOU, WE WON'T BE ABLE TO SAVE TOMITAKE FROM THE CLINIC BASEMENT.

...YOU CAN'T ASSIGN RANKS TO PEOPLE'S LIVES, BUT THIS IS ONE TIME WHERE WE HAVE TO PUT THINGS IN ORDER.

AFTER RIKA-CHAN'S, YOUR LIFE IS THE MOST VALUABLE RIGHT NOW.

I KNOW. YOU ALL HURRY TOO...

RIKA-SAN, BE CARE-FUL!

ZURU (SLIP)

...AH!

I UNDER-STAND...

NH...

RIKA !!

I-I'M ALL RIGHT ...!

I'M SO TIRED OF LIVING SO LONG AND NEVER GROW-ING UP!

THESE ARMS AND LEGS ARE SO SHORT!

GARA (DANGLE)

PARA (DANGLE)

THERE'S NO WAY IN HELL I'M GOING TO STAY IN THIS CHILD'S BODY FOR-EVER...!

I WILL MAKE IT THROUGH JUNE 1983, AND I WILL GROW TALLER!

AND MY CHEST WILL GET MUCH BIGGER TOO!

ZA (SK-SH)

RENA'S ON HER WAY DOWN!

...WHOA!

KEI-CHAN! HOW IS IT GOING!?

...SH-SHION?

WHAT ARE YOU HOLDING ...!?

I APPRECI-ATE YOUR MANLY PRIDE, KEI-CHAN.

SHION, LET ME DO IT!

YOU GO DOWN NEXT!

Y-YOU'RE GONNA HAVE A SHOOT-OUT? HERE...?

WELL, YOU WOULDN'T EXPECT TO SEE ONE IN THE HANDS OF A CIVILIAN.

KASAI AND I WILL TAKE CARE OF THINGS HERE.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.

BEAUTIFUL WOMEN DON'T DIE. ☆

BUT WE'LL LOSE LESS TIME IF YOU TAKE YOUR TURN GOING DOWN THE LADDER...

...THAN IF I HAVE TO GIVE YOU A LECTURE ON HOW TO USE A KALASH-NIKOV.

DOOOOM (BOOOM)

WHAT WAS THAT ...!?

...THEY PROBABLY JUST BROKE DOWN THE DOOR TO THE TORTURE CHAMBER.

THAT MEANS WE'RE DOWN TO ONE DOOR BETWEEN US AND THE ENEMY.

KEI-ICHI-KUN! HURRY!!

GO, KEI-CHAN. HURRY DOWN THE LADDER.

...!

GU (CLENCH)

BA (FWP)

NO, SHION!

YOU GO DOWN FIRST!!

I DON'T HAVE THE ONE I LOVE ANY-MORE.

IF I LET YOU STAY HERE, KE-CHAN, AND I SURVIVE WHILE YOU DON'T, ONEE WILL HATE ME FOR THE REST OF OUR LIVES.

BUT ONEE DOES.

!!

DOKAAAAN! (KABOOM)

HUH!?

THIS IS A WEIRD TIME TO BE TALKING ABOUT—

!!

DO

DO (BLAM)

CRUSH THEM!!

TARGET SIGHTED !!

DADA (DASH)

SHION-SAN! THEY'RE HERE!!

...I HOPE WE CAN BE TWINS IN THE NEXT LIFE TOO.

YOU NEED TO GO.

SHION...

(BLAM) DO DO DO DO

I'M NOT PLANNING ON DYING HERE, BUT WHEN YOU GET DOWN THERE, TELL "SHION"...

KEI-CHAN.

SHION...

...IF WE'RE REINCAR-NATED...

SHION
...

KEI-ICHI-KUN!

SHION, HURRY AND GET DOWN HERE!!

WE'VE GOT KEI-CHAN!

DO (THD)

I KNOW IT'S RECKLESS TO STAY HERE.

BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO US AS LONG AS RIKA-CHAN AND COACH GET OUT...

YOU TAKE THE OTHERS AND ESCAPE INTO THE MOUN-TAINS.

RENA.

MION AND I WILL WAIT HERE FOR SHION.

ZA (SKFF)

.....

LET'S GO...

...COME ON, RIKA-CHAN. COACH.

NO.

...ALL RIGHT.

GU (SQUEEZE)

RIKA
...

I DON'T WANT A FUTURE WHERE SHION DIES OR KASAI DIES!!

DA (DASH)

THIS IS THE LAST WORLD !!

.....

WE CAN'T LEAVE ANYONE BEHIND.

SO NO! NO, WE CAN'T LEAVE THEM! NEVER!!

I KNOW I CAN'T DO IT OVER AGAIN!

HURRY AND GET DOWN HERE !!!

SO SHION!

ドドド

SAITOH AND KABAYAMA...

...ARE DEAD?

ALL...

NIGHTINGALE 1 TO PHOENIX 1

SITUATION CLEAR.

N... NO...!!

...!!

WE'VE STOPPED THE GUN FIRE

...!!

KA (FLASH)

!!

CAN YOU HEAR US?

WE'VE TAKEN CONTROL OF THE AREA.

STOP YOUR FUTILE RESIS-TANCE.

YOU ...

(GIRI (GRIP)

...YOU MURDER-ERS!!

HOW COULD YOU!? HOW COULD YOU KILL SHION !!!?

PAPA (CRUMBLE)

WHA ...

...WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN...?

YOU MEAN THE GIRL UP HERE?

RELAX. SHE'S STILL ALIVE.

THE SAME GOES FOR THE MAN. HE'S ALIVE TOO.

SHE'S ALIVE, MI-CHAN !!

...WHETHER OR NOT THEY STAY ALIVE IS UP TO YOU.

BUT...

GIVE US RIKA FURUDE AND KYO-SUKE IRIE!

...SHION!!

SH...

COMPLY, OR WE'LL DROP THE HOS-TAGES!

SH...

...SHION !!

GIVE US RIKA FURUDE AND KYOSUKE IRIE.

YOU HAVE SIXTY SECONDS BEFORE WE DROP THE FIRST HOSTAGE.

CHAPTER 28: I'M HERE TO HELP YOU

WH-WH-WHAT DO WE DO ?

THEY'RE GOING TO KILL SHION

DON'T YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HOSTAGES!? WHEN YOU HAVE MORE THAN ONE, KIDNAPPERS CAN GO AWAY AS YOU WANT.

WHAT !?

TH-THEY'RE BLUFFING

THEY WOULDN'T DARE HURT HER

...AND MAKE THE SAME DEMANDS ON US AGAIN!

THEY HAVE SHION AND KASAI-SAN UP THERE.

THEY'LL PUSH SHION DOWN...

IF YOU GO UP THERE, COACH, EVERYTHING SHII-CHAN DID WILL HAVE BEEN FOR NOTHING.

SHII-CHAN STAYED UP THERE TO GIVE US TIME TO GET AWAY.

GYUU (CLENCH)

WE'LL TELL THEM THAT RIKA-SAN HAS ALREADY ESCAPED...

...I'M THE ONE THEY WANT.

...AND I'LL GO ALONE.

...NO.

YOU...!

RENA!

I FEEL LIKE MY HEART IS ABOUT TO BREAK TOO.

PLEASE STOP THAT, MION-SAN!

SHION... SHION IS...!

ARE YOU SAYING SHION SHOULD DIE!?

DON! (WHAM)

...MY NEE-NEE...!

SHION-SAN IS MY...

AAAA-AAAH...

NNNH...

SATO-KO...

UWA-AAAH...!!

SHION! SHION...!

DO SOME-THING...

...YOU'RE A GOD, AREN'T YOU...?

DO SOME-THING...!

ギュッ!!

WAAA

AH...

...I DON'T KNOW, SIR.

HEY, HANYU WHAT CAN WE DO...?

HELP SHION!

USE YOUR SUPER-NATURAL POWER TO BEAT THE BAD GUYS!

YOU'RE A GOD! MAKE A MIRA-CLE!!

SO MAKE ONE!!

WE CAN'T SAVE HER WITH-OUT A MIRACLE, RIGHT!?

PACHIN (SLAP)

RIKA. LISTEN.

NGH... HANYU ...?

PATAN (THUMP)

SOMETIMES YOU WERE TAUGHT THINGS.

SOMETIMES I WAS TAUGHT THINGS.

WE BOTH LEARNED SO MANY IMPORTANT THINGS.

AND FINALLY IN THIS WORLD, WE'VE LEARNED THE MOST IMPORTANT THING OF ALL.

WE'VE BEEN THROUGH COUNTLESS WORLDS TOGETHER.

WE'VE LEARNED MUCH THAT MOST PEOPLE NEVER CAN.

THE THING WE NEVER STOPPED SEARCHING FOR—THE THING WE FINALLY GAINED.

YOU KNOW WHAT THAT IS, SIR.

.....

WHAT WE LEARNED ...

WE LEARNED ...

...HOW TO MAKE A MIRACLE.

Y-YOU'VE GOTTA BE KID-DING!

YOU MIGHT BUY US SOME TIME, BUT THEY ARE GOING TO KILL YOU!!

BUT THERE WILL BE TIME BEFORE THEY DO. THAT WILL BE OUR CHANCE.

...I KNOW YOU'LL ALL MAKE THE MOST OF IT.

I WILL GO TO THE WILD DOGS.

I WANT YOU ALL TO RUN, SIRS.

R-RIKA-CHAN!?

BUT I'M THE ONE TAKANO IS REALLY INTER-ESTED IN. THEY WON'T KILL ME RIGHT AWAY.

IF I DON'T GO, THEY WILL KILL SHII AND KASAI VERY SOON.

RIKA...

ONCE I STARTED THINKING ABOUT IT, IT WAS VERY SIMPLE, SIR.

I BELIEVE IN YOU.

I KNOW YOU'LL ALL COME TO SAVE ME.

EVEN A GOD BELIEVES.

WE ALL BELIEVE THAT WE WILL WIN.

...SO WE'RE NOT IN ANY TROUBLE AT ALL, SIRS.

NIPAAA (BEAM)

IN EXCHANGE, PLEASE LET MY FRIENDS GET AWAY, SIRS.

...I'M COMING UP.

RIKA-CHAN...

NGH ...

.....

ALL RIGHT.

WE ACCEPT YOUR DEMANDS. WE'LL LET YOU GO.

SEND RIKA FURUDE UP.

YOU'RE A VERY IMPORTANT PERSON. WE CAN'T HAVE YOU DISAPPEARIN' ON US LIKE THAT

THAT'S AGAINST THE RULES

WE LOOKED EVERY-WHERE FOR YOU, RIKA-SAN

ﾅﾆ!!

HEY YOU

NOW THEN, YOU'LL BE COMING WITH US TO THE CLINIC, RIKA-SAN.

WH... WHAT...?

IF THEY RESIST, GO AHEAD AND SHOOT THEM ON THE SPOT.

GO BACK INTO THE BASE-MENT.

ROUND UP EVERY LAST ONE OF THOSE BRATS AND TIE THEM UP.

...Y-YOU'RE BREAKING YOUR PROMISE...

PROM-ISE?

YOU! YOU DIRTY COW-ARD...!

HEH-HEH-HEH-HEH!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT?

!!

GYU (TUG)

MMPH ...!

HEY.

AND WE CAN'T HAVE HER BITIN' HER TONGUE ON US.

MMM!!

MMMM-MMM!!

IF HE GIVES ME THAT INJECTION, THAT WILL BE THE END OF THIS WORLD.

THIS SHOT WILL MOST LIKELY KNOCK ME OUT UNTIL IT'S TIME TO KILL ME.

GIVE HER THE INJECTION.

WE WON'T LOSE. WE CAN'T LOSE.

WE'RE ALL GOING TO WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE A MIRACLE!

...ARE WE GOING TO LOSE TO TAKANO AGAIN?

GUI (SQUEEZE)

...I MADE IT...

I'VE REGRET-TED IT IN TOO MANY WORLDS TO COUNT.

EVERY TIME I REALIZED, IT WAS ALWAYS TOO LATE...

YOU'RE NOT ONE OF US!!

WHO ARE YOU!?

I'M GOING TO SAY THE ONE THING...

...I'VE BEEN WANTING TO SAY ALL THIS TIME.

RIKA-CHAN. I'M HERE...

...TO HELP YOU!!

...AKA-SAKAAA...!!!

...A...

...A...

I DISGUISED MYSELF AS A WILD DOG AND WAITED FOR THE RIGHT MOMENT.

IT'S OKAY NOW.

BUT IT WAS A WEIGHTY PROM-ISE...

...ONE THAT WOULD NEVER BE FUL-FILLED AFTER ONLY FIVE YEARS' TIME.

THE PROMISE WAS MADE FIVE YEARS AGO.

ZA (SKSH)

SU (SHFF)

JUNE 1983, HINAMIZAWA

HE TRAINED HIS BODY, BELIEVING THAT MIRACLES COULD HAPPEN.

THERE WAS A MAN WHO SUFFERED FOR A HUNDRED YEARS THROUGH MANY WORLDS THE REGRET OF FAILING TO SAVE ONE GIRL.

THERE WAS A GIRL WHO WAITED FOR THE MAN THROUGH COUNTLESS WORLDS, WISHING FOR HIM TO COME.

THEIR FEELINGS ARE NOW MAKING A MIRACLE.

THIS PROMISE... IS A VOW SPANNING MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS.

AT LAST, MA-MORU AKA-SAKA...

...HAS COME IN TIME TO SAVE RIKA FURU-DE!!

YES, SIR!

GET BACK, RIKA-CHAN

ﾀﾞｯ!

Y-YOU LITTLE ...!!

...FROM THE FIRST PUNCH...

BUT TODAY...

...HE WOULD PULL HIS PUNCHES

...KARA'S AKA SARA HAS SO STRONG THAT IN NORMAL FIGHTS

...AKA-SAKA HELD NOTH-ING BACK!!

AKA-SAKA'S COL-LEAGUES ...

VON (WOOSH)

...PRAISED AND FEARED HIS STRENGTH !!

THEY USED TO SAY...

...HE WAS AS POWER-FUL...

HE SHOWED NOT AN OUNCE OF MERCY!!

THUS HE PUT DOWN HIS OPPO-NENTS IN A SINGLE BLOW !!

HE WAS THE EMBODIMENT OF PURE KARATE!!

EVERY PUNCH FELLED A FOE!!

...AS AN ARMOR-PIERCING BULLET!

WHA ...!?
THAT'S IMPOS-SIBLE...

I'LL WAIT HERE AND DRAW PICTURES, SIR! ☆

MEW! ☆

DON'T WORRY, RIKA-CHAN.

AS LONG AS I'M HERE, I WON'T LET THEM LAY A FINGER ON YOU.

ZA (SKFF)

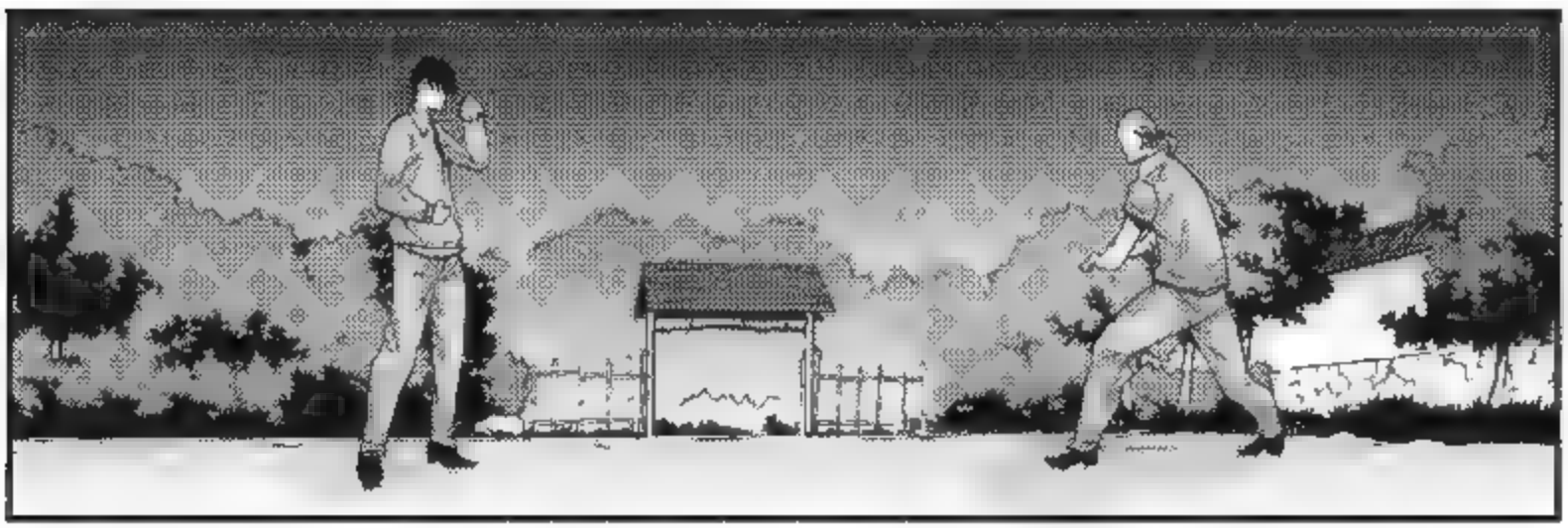
GUESS THAT MEANS ...

PAN (SMACK)

SOME OF THOSE WILD DOGS ARE SKILLED FIGHTERS. BUT YOU'RE TELLIN' ME THAT EVEN A MOB OF 'EM IS WORTHLESS AGAINST YOU?

HEH HEH HEH... YOU'RE GOOD...

...ONLY A COMBAT SPECIALIST LIKE ME CAN GIVE YOU A RUN FOR YOUR MONEY.



YOU REALLY BUFFED UP.

YOU... I RECOG-NIZE THAT FACE.

.....

SO YOU'RE THE LEADER OF THIS TEAM?

LOOK HOW GROWN UP HE IS NOW!

THE LITTLE GREENHORN WHO ONLY JUST MANAGED TO RESCUE THE MINISTER'S GRANDSON FIVE YEARS AGO—

...DON'T TELL ME...

...YOU WERE THE ONE WHO...?

SO...

I DID YOU A FAVOR BACK THEN SINCE I WAS ORDERED TO GO EASY ON YOU...

...AND THAT BLUBBERY OLD MAN GOT IN THE WAY TOO.

ZA (GKSH)

I CAN'T HOLD BACK! DON'T HOLD IT AGAINST ME IF I ACCIDEN-TALLY KILL YOU!

...I'M REAL HAPPY NOW!

IT DOESN'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST MY MILITARY MARTIAL ARTS!

IZA! (ZSHO)

YOUR FIGHT-ING STYLE IS KARATE!

DA (DASH)

I EAT YOU BY-THE-BOOK KARATE GUYS FOR BREAK-FAST!!

VON (VWOOM)

I'VE BEEN THROUGH REAL BAT-TLES!

YOU'LL NEVER BEAT ME!

DON'CHA GOT ANY-THING TO SAY!? EH!?

HEH HEH HEH HEH!! WHAT'S WRONG, KARATE KID!?

.....

... WHAT?

WHA...

...WHAT DID YOU SAY...?

A LIGHT TAP.

ZA (SKSH)

IT LETS YOU KNOW THAT HITTING SOMEONE MEANS TAKING A HIT YOURSELF.

KARATE NOURISHES THE HEART.

WHA ...!?

...THE ONLY THOUGHT BEHIND YOUR PUNCH IS TO DEFEAT YOUR OPPONENT.

IT DOESN'T CARRY ANY WEIGHT.

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH PAIN AND SADNESS IT GIVES THEM.

PAKI

PAKI (CRICK)

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR ATTACK DOES TO THE ENEMY.

THAT'S WHY YOUR PUNCH...

...DOESN'T CARRY ANY WEIGHT.

GU (CLENCH)

...HEH HEH... GREEN-HORN...

...ARE YOU SAYING ...

ヒュ〜〜

HYU (SWSH)

...THAT I'M THE ROOKIE !!?

BAN (SMACK)

GWIIIN (ZING)

NNGH !?

DAN (SLAM)

GO (WHAM)

GH!

ガッ

...WHAT IS HE...?

WHAT...

HE'S WALKED ACROSS HIS SHARE OF BATTLE-FIELDS...

...HIS AUTH-ENTIC-NESS.

HE'S TROUBLE THE WAY HE MOVES...

12

UWAA-AAAA-AAAH!!?

DO (THOOM)

MEKO (CRUMBLE)

NO. I'M ONLY USING KARATE.

YOU'RE USIN' MORE THAN JUST KARATE!

ZAWA MURMUR

WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT... CRAZY HIGH-POWERED HEEL DROP...!?

BA (FWP)

Y-YOU LITTLE ...!

THE HEART OF MARTIAL ARTS ISN'T IN THE FORM.

THE OUT-WARD FORM IS USED AS A MEANS TO GET TO THE HEART.

...YOU'RE ONLY LOOKING AT ONE ASPECT OF MARTIAL ARTS.

D-DON'T LIE TO ME...!

...I'M DISAP-POINTED IN YOU.

...

ERK?

ZAZA (SKID)

LET ME TEACH YOU ABOUT TRUE WEIGHT.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO HIT SOME-ONE.

ZA (SKSH)

DON (THMP)

ZA
ZA (SKSH)

ZA
ALL I CAN THINK IS THAT HE'S BEEN REBORN.

HE'S A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT MAN THAN THE NEWBIE I FOUGHT FIVE YEARS AGO.
HE'S A MONSTER. PURE AND SIMPLE.
ZA
ZA

ZA
ZA

GRI (GRIND)

BUT...!

I'M A PRO. A PROFES-SIONAL.

I WAS WITH THE ARMED FORCES.

...WON'T LET ME LOSE TO THIS AMATEUR ...!!

...AND MY PRIDE...

MY EXPERI-ENCE...

RRRR-
RRRA-
AAAA-
AAGH!

WELL, GOOD FOR YOU.

OF THE WILD DOGS!!

I AM OKO-NOGI!

...DO THEY PAY YOU?

AND HOW MUCH...

GURA GURGH

DOON CWHAMD

DON (THUD)

AHH...

AH...

YORO (STAGGER)

ハァ…

ZAWA (MURMUR)

W-WE NEED WEAP-ONS!

GET THE COMBAT TEAM BACK FROM UNDER-GROUND!!

WE... WE CAN'T BEAT HIM...

LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH. COME AT ME ALL AT ONCE.

NEXT?

SU (SSK)

スッ

DOON (WHAM)

DO (BLAM)

ドパパパタタタ"!

PARATATATA (RAT-A-TAT-TAT)

LET RIKA-CHAN GO!!!

ドドド

DA (TMP)
DA
DA
DA

THANK YOU...

A...

...AKA-SAKA.

SIRS!

RIKA-CHAN !!

RIKA-CHAN, ARE YOU OKAY !?

THAT'S ALL IT WAS, SIR.

WE'RE ALL COMBINING OUR STRENGTH, AND SO AKASAKA, ONE OF US, CAME TO HELP.

I'M FINE, THANKS TO A MIRACLE.

IRIE IS LOOK-ING AFTER SHION NOW.

WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE SAFE, RIKA, SIR.

IT WASN'T A MIRACLE, SIR.

YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT!

NOW IT'S OUR TURN TO TAKE THE OFFEN-SIVE, SIR!

THEN LET'S GET READY!

NOW WE KNOW WITHOUT A DOUBT THAT THE WILD DOGS ARE RUNNING WILD.

IF TOMITAKE REPORTS THIS TO THE WATCHDOGS, THEN THEY'LL SEND BACKUP.

ALL RIGHT!

PAAN (SMACK)

IT'S TIME TO START OPERATION RESCUE TOMITAKE-SAN!!

HIGURASHI WHEN THEY CRY FESTIVAL ACCOMPANYING ARC ③ END

Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY
FESTIVAL ACCOMPANYING ARC

©Ryukishi07/Project Higurashi, Published by Yen Press

ABOUT THE "FESTIVAL ACCOMPANYING" ARC: TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE. THREE HEADS ARE BETTER THAN TWO.

ORIGINAL STORY, SUPERVISOR: RYUKISHI07

HELLO, I'M RYUKISHI07.

NOW EVEN THE "FESTIVAL ACCOMPANYING" ARC HAS REACHED ITS FINAL STAGES.

THIS IS ALSO THE VOLUME WHERE THE GROWN-UPS FIGHT THEIR BATTLES. ESPECIALLY OOISHI! HE MAKES PEACE AND JOINS FORCES WITH THE SONOZAKI FAMILY—ONCE HIS POWERFUL ENEMY WITH A STRONG INFLUENCE ON EVERYONE IN THE VILLAGE—AND TOGETHER THEY REPEL OOTAKA. I WONDER IF IT'S BECAUSE HE'S SO WELL LOVED THAT HE WAS ABLE TO COME OUT VICTORIOUS. BECAUSE IF OOISHI HAD LOST HIS BATTLE, OPERATION FORTY-EIGHT HOURS WOULD HAVE ENDED IN FAILURE. AS FOR OOTAKA...I GET THE FEELING THAT HE'S YOUR TYPICAL PUNCHING BAG CHARACTER. (HA-HA!)

THIS VOLUME ALSO INCLUDED TOMITAKE'S BIG MOMENT IN THE SPOTLIGHT. TOMITAKE, THE MAN WHO STOPS AT NOTHING TO HELP THE WOMAN HE LOVES. I NEVER EVEN DREAMED THAT HE WOULD GET TO BE SUCH A BELOVED CHARACTER.

"THERE'S SOMEONE I WANT TO PROTECT, EVEN IF IT COSTS ME MY OWN LIFE...I CAN'T AFFORD TO STOP BECAUSE I'M HELPING THE ONE I WANT TO PROTECT." I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO SAY SOMETHING THAT COOL. BUT IN THE END, IT DIDN'T TAKE MUCH TO CATCH HIM. (HA-HA!)

IS THERE SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU WHO'S LIKE TOMITAKE? WHEN YOUR FRIEND IS AGONIZING ABOUT SOMETHING ALL ON THEIR OWN, PLEASE BE THERE FOR THEM SO THAT YOU CAN AGONIZE AND THINK ABOUT THE PROBLEM WITH THEM. TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE. THREE HEADS ARE BETTER THAN TWO. AS THE CIRCLE EXPANDS, EVENTUALLY IT BECOMES GREAT POWER.

I HOPE THAT YOU WILL BE A PART OF THAT CIRCLE...

WE'VE FINALLY MADE IT THIS FAR...

LOOKING BACK, A LOT HAS HAP-PENED.

HIGURASHI WHEN THEY CRY
FESTIVAL ACCOMPANYING ARC
BONUS FRAGMENT

BUT IT WAS ALL RUINED ON THE DAY OF THE COTTON DRIFT-ING.

MEW!

I WAS ABLE TO REIGN AS THE EMPRESS OF THE FOREST SERVICES.

MEMBERS OF OUR CLUB HAVE SUCCUMBED TO THE DISEASE AND KILLED THEIR FRIENDS.

RIKA.

YOU'RE CONFUSING DREAMS WITH REALITY, SIR.

ONCE I EVEN ENCOUNTERED A PINK STALKER AND WAS FORCED TO TAKE PART IN AN ENDLESS GAME OF CHESS.

...BUT YOUR SUPPORT WILL LEAD US TO VICTORY.

BELIEVE IN OUR VICTORY AND GIVE US THE POWER TO MAKE A MIRACLE.

TO THOSE OF YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FRAGMENT, I DON'T KNOW YOUR FACES

I'M SURE THEY WILL ALL SUPPORT US, SIR.

IT'S ALL RIGHT, REA. SIR.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT.

カッ…

HO HO HO!

HO HO HO!

AHHH! TRAI-TORS!

DAMMIT TOMITAKE! NOT YOU TOO, SIR!

I'LL PAY YOU A SALARY AND GIVE YOU A LITTLE REWARD!

BE MY SUPPORT-ERS.

EVEN IF YOU DO GROW UP, THERE'S NO GUARANTEE THAT YOUR CHEST WILL GROW TOO, SIR.

YOU'LL REGRET THIS, AND DON'T COME CRYING TO ME WHEN YOU DO, SIRS!

JUST GIVE ME TEN YEARS! I'LL HAVE SURPASSED TAKANO, SIRS!

THANK YOU FOR READING THIS FAR. BEFORE I DRAW THE ROUGH DRAFTS OF THE MANGA, I PLAY THROUGH THE VISUAL NOVEL FOR A REVIEW. BUT THE "FESTIVAL ACCOMPANYING" ARC IS ONE CLIMACTIC BATTLE AFTER ANOTHER, SO I GET VERY ABSORBED IN IT BECAUSE IT'S SO GOOD. (OF COURSE, ALL OF THE ARCS ARE GOOD.) AKASAKA'S KARATE SKILLS ARE UNBELIEVABLE, AREN'T THEY? I BET LIFE WOULD BE REALLY FUN IF I COULD GET THAT GOOD AT MARTIAL ARTS. I SUDDENLY REALIZED THAT THE ANGEL MORT COSTUME, WHICH I'VE DRAWN REGULARLY SINCE THE "ABDUCTED BY DEMONS" ARC, HASN'T SHOWN UP IN A REALLY LONG TIME, AND I GOT JUST A LITTLE DEPRESSED.

THE BATTLE SURROUNDING RIKA-CHAMA STILL HAS A LONG WAY TO GO. I HOPE YOU WILL WATCH OVER THE DEAD HEAT BETWEEN TAKANO'S WILL AND THE CLUB MEMBERS' WILLS UNTIL IT'S ALL OVER.

-SPECIAL THANKS-

-ORIGINAL STORY, SUPERVISOR-
RYUKISHI07-SAMA, BT-SAMA,
YATAZAKURA-SAMA, TOKIBI-SAMA,
TSUBAKI NARUSE-SAMA,
NEKOZAKURA-SAMA, KAKUMU-SAMA

-MY EDITORS-
KOIZUMI-SAMA, KUBOTA-SAMA

-MY STAFF-
JUN AKAGAMI-SAMA, SHIGETOMO
TANAKURA-SAMA, NAYU Y-SAMA,
NIWAKO-SAMA, NODA-SAMA,
TOMOKA FURUTA-SAMA, YF-SAMA

AND YOU!

KARIN SUZURAGI

I WAS JUST SNEAKING IN TO THE SAIGUDEN TO LOOK AROUND, BUT THEY GOT MY PICTURE.

LOOK, THEY THINK I'M OYASHIRO-SAMA. TEE-HEE-HEE-HEE-HEE.

I'M NOT THAT CREEPY LOOKING, SIR!!

THE PHOTOG-RAPHER SAW IT ALL! THE SHADOW OF A VENGEFUL SPIRIT, WIT-NESSED IN THE SAIGUDEN.

DOES OYA-SHIRO-SAMA REALLY EXIST?

HA-HA-HA. OH, IT MAKES ME BLUSH TO HAVE IT BROUGHT UP AGAIN...

SO, YOU MAKE RENA'S CLOTHES YOURSELF, RENA'S DAD?

TH-THAT'S PRETTY BOLD...

I LIKE THIS ONE TOO.

OHH, SHE LOOKS REALLY COOL!

SHE HAS AN OUTFIT LIKE THIS TOO.

KA (FLASH)

AND THERE'S ONE I'M REALLY PROUD OF THAT I WOULD LOVE TO SEE REINA IN.

PAPA... ♡

YOU GOOD-FOR-NOTHING OLD MAN!!

YOU TOOK THE THIGH HIGHS OFF OF RENA! YOU KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE TRUE HEART OF MOE!!

ALL RIGHT, TIME FOR SOME EDUCATION! LISTEN! THE HISTORY OF MOE DATES ALL THE WAY BACK TO WHEN MAN STARTED WALKING ON TWO LEGS...

BOGUU (PUNCH)

ZASHU (SLASH)

I HOPE YOU'LL STOP HAVING SUCH PERVERTED FANTASIES IN MY ABSENCE! I HOPE!

HIGURASHI
WHEN THEY CRY
FESTIVAL ACCOMPANYING ARC ③

RYUKISHI07
Karin Suzuragi

Translation: Alethea Nibley and Athena Nibley

Lettering: Abigail Blackman

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

Higurashi WHEN THEY CRY Festival Accompanying Arc, Vol. 5, 6
©RYUKISHI07/07th Expansion ©2010 Karin Suzuragi/SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD. First published in Japan in 2010 by SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD. English translation rights arranged with SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD. and Hachette Book Group through Tuttle-Mori Agency, Inc.

Translation ©2014 by SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD.

All rights reserved. In accordance with the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976, the scanning, uploading, and electronic sharing of any part of this book without the permission of the publisher is unlawful piracy and theft of the author's intellectual property. If you would like to use material from the book (other than for review purposes), prior written permission must be obtained by contacting the publisher at permissions@hbgusa.com. Thank you for your support of the author's rights.

Yen Press
Hachette Book Group
237 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017

HachetteBookGroup.com
YenPress.com

Yen Press is an imprint of Hachette Book Group, Inc. The Yen Press name and logo are trademarks of Hachette Book Group, Inc.

The publisher is not responsible for websites (or their content) that are not owned by the publisher.

First Yen Press ebook Edition: April 2014

ebook ISBN: 978-0-316-23783-3

App ISBN: 978-0-316-23894-6